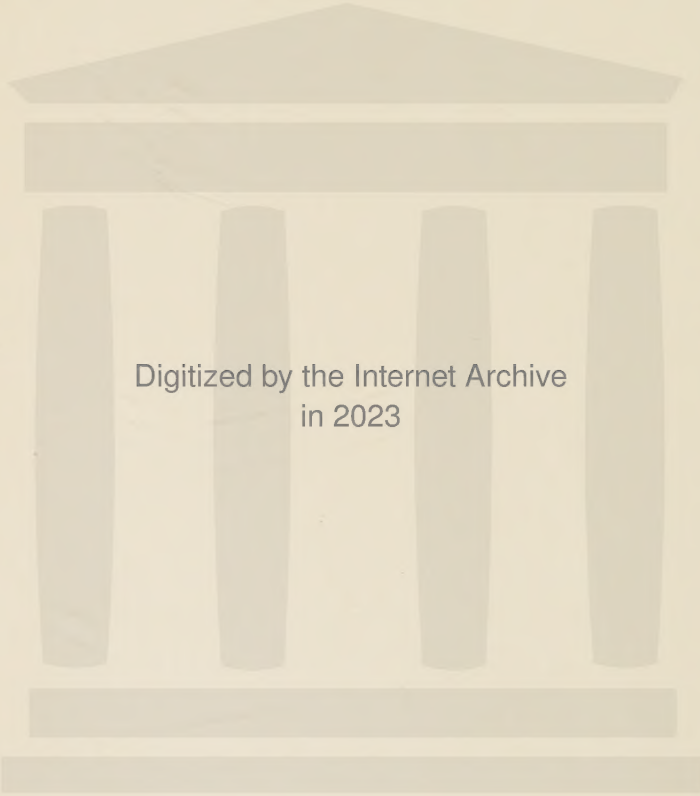


THE POEMS OF SHELLEY



THE text of this edition of SHELLEY'S poems is the result of a fresh collation of the early editions, alternative readings being at the foot of the page. The original punctuation has been retained save where it tends to obscure or pervert the poet's meaning. The notes pay particular attention to variations in punctuation, and there is a bibliography.

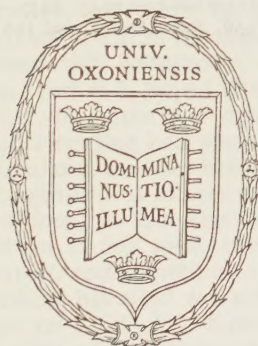
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THE COMPLETE POETICAL WORKS OF Percy Bysshe Shelley

EDITED BY
THOMAS HUTCHINSON



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PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

Born, Warnham, Sussex, 4 August 1792

Died at Sea, off Leghorn, 8 July 1822

This edition of The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley was first published in crown 8vo format in 1905 and reprinted in 1907, 1908, 1909, 1911, 1912, 1914, 1917, 1919 (twice), 1921, 1923, 1925, 1927 (twice), 1929, 1932, 1935, 1940, and 1943. It was entirely reset in demy 8vo format in 1943 and reprinted in 1945, 1947, 1949, 1952, 1956, 1960 (twice), and 1961



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PREFACE

THIS edition of his *Poetical Works* contains all Shelley's ascertained poems and fragments of verse that have hitherto appeared in print. In preparing the volume I have worked as far as possible on the principle of recognizing the *editio princeps* as the primary textual authority. I have not been content to reprint Mrs. Shelley's recension of 1839, or that of any subsequent editor of the *Poems*. The present text is the result of a fresh collation of the early editions; and in every material instance of departure from the wording of those originals the rejected reading has been subjoined in a footnote. Again, wherever—as in the case of *Julian and Maddalo*—there has appeared to be good reason for superseding the authority of the *editio princeps*, the fact is announced, and the substituted exemplar indicated, in the Prefatory Note. In the case of a few pieces extant in two or more versions of debatable authority the alternative text or texts will be found at the foot of the page; but it may be said once for all that this does not pretend to be a *variorum* edition, in the proper sense of the term—the textual apparatus does not claim to be exhaustive. Thus I have not thought it necessary to cumber the footnotes with every minute grammatical correction introduced by Mrs. Shelley, apparently on her own authority, into the texts of 1839; nor has it come within the scheme of this edition to record every conjectural emendation adopted or proposed by Rossetti and others in recent times. But it is hoped that, up to and including the editions of 1839 at least, no important variation of the text has been overlooked. Whenever a reading has been adopted on MS. authority, a reference to the particular source has been added below.

I have been chary of gratuitous interference with the punctuation of the MSS. and early editions; in this direction, however, some revision was indispensable. Even in his most carefully finished 'fair copy' Shelley under-punctuates¹, and sometimes punctuates capriciously. In the very act of transcribing his mind was apt to stray from the work in hand to higher things; he would lose himself in contemplating those airy abstractions and lofty visions of which alone he greatly cared to sing, to the neglect and detriment of the merely external and formal element of his song. Shelley recked little of the jots and tittles of literary craftsmanship; he committed many a small sin against the rules of grammar, and certainly paid but a halting attention to the nice distinctions of punctuation. Thus in the early editions a comma occasionally plays the part of a semicolon; colons and semicolons seem to be employed interchangeably; a semicolon almost invariably appears where nowadays we should employ the dash; and, lastly, the dash itself becomes a point of all work, replacing indifferently commas, colons, semicolons or periods. Inadequate and sometimes haphazard as it is, however, Shelley's punctuation, so far as it goes, is of great value as an index to his metrical, or at times, it may be, to his rhetorical intention—

¹ Thus in the exquisite autograph 'Hunt MS.' of *Julian and Maddalo*, Mr. Buxton Forman, the most conservative of editors, finds it necessary to supplement Shelley's punctuation in no fewer than ninety-four places.

for, in Shelley's hands, punctuation serves rather to mark the rhythmical pause and onflow of the verse, or to secure some declamatory effect, than to indicate the structure or elucidate the sense. For this reason the original pointing has been retained, save where it tends to obscure or pervert the poet's meaning. Amongst the Editor's Notes at the end of the volume the reader will find lists of the punctual variations in the longer poems, by means of which the supplementary points now added may be identified, and the original points, which in this edition have been deleted or else replaced by others, ascertained, in the order of their occurrence. In the use of capitals Shelley's practice has been followed, while an attempt has been made to reduce the number of his inconsistencies in this regard.

To have reproduced the spelling of the MSS. would only have served to divert attention from Shelley's poetry to my own ingenuity in disgusting the reader according to the rules of editorial punctilio¹. Shelley was neither very accurate, nor always consistent, in his spelling. He was, to say the truth, indifferent about all such matters: indeed, to one absorbed in the spectacle of a world travelling for lack of the gospel of *Political Justice*, the study of orthographical niceties must have seemed an occupation for Bedlamites. Again—as a distinguished critic and editor of Shelley, Professor Dowden, aptly observes in this connexion—'a great poet is not of an age, but for all time.' Irregular or antiquated forms such as 'recieve,' 'sacrifize,' 'tyger,' 'gulph,' 'desart,' 'falshood,' and the like, can only serve to distract the reader's attention, and mar his enjoyment of the verse. Accordingly Shelley's eccentricities in this kind have been discarded, and his spelling revised in accordance with modern usage. All weak preterite-forms, whether indicatives or participles, have been printed with *ed* rather than *t*, participial adjectives and substantives, such as 'past,' alone excepted. In the case of 'leap,' which has two preterite-forms, both employed by Shelley²—one with the long vowel of the present-form, the other with a vowel-change³ like that of 'crept' from 'creep'—I have not hesitated to print the longer form 'leaped,' and the shorter (after Mr. Henry Sweet's example) 'lept,' in order clearly to indicate the pronunciation intended by Shelley. In the editions the two vowel-sounds are confounded under the one spelling, 'leapt.' In a few cases Shelley's spelling, though unusual or obsolete, has been retained. Thus in 'aethereal,' 'paeon,' and one or two more words the *ae* will be found, and 'airy' still appears as 'aëry.' Shelley seems to have uniformly written 'lightening': here the word is so printed whenever it is employed as a trisyllable; elsewhere the ordinary spelling has been adopted⁴.

¹ I adapt a phrase or two from the preface to *The Revolt of Islam*.

² See for an example of the longer form, the *Hymn to Mercury*, xviii. 5, where 'leaped' rhymes with 'heaped' (l. 1). The shorter form, rhyming to 'wept,' 'adapt,' &c., occurs more frequently.

³ Of course, wherever this vowel-shortening takes place, whether indicated by a corresponding change in the spelling or not, *t*, not *ed* is properly used—'cleave,' 'cleft'; 'deal,' 'dealt'; &c. The forms discarded under the general rule laid down above are such as 'wrackt,' 'prankt,' 'snatcht,' 'kist,' 'opprest,' &c.

⁴ Not a little has been written about 'uprest' (*Revolt of Islam*, III. xxi. 5), which has been

The editor of Shelley to-day enters upon a goodly heritage, the accumulated gains of a series of distinguished predecessors. Mrs. Shelley's two editions of 1839 form the nucleus of the present volume, and her notes are here reprinted in full; but the arrangement of the poems differs to some extent from that followed by her—chiefly in respect of *Queen Mab*, which is here placed at the head of the *Juvenilia*, instead of at the forefront of the poems of Shelley's maturity. In 1862 a slender volume of poems and fragments, entitled *Relics of Shelley*, was published by Dr. Richard Garnett, C.B.—a precious sheaf gleaned from the MSS. preserved at Boscombe Manor. The *Relics* constitute a salvage second only in value to the *Posthumous Poems* of 1824. To the growing mass of Shelley's verse yet more material was added in 1870 by Mr. William Michael Rossetti, who edited for Moxon the *Complete Poetical Works* published in that year. To him we owe in particular a revised and greatly enlarged version of the fragmentary drama of *Charles I.* But though not seldom successful in restoring the text, Mr. Rossetti pushed revision beyond the bounds of prudence, freely correcting grammatical errors, rectifying small inconsistencies in the sense, and too lightly adopting conjectural emendations on the grounds of rhyme or metre. In the course of an article published in the *Westminster Review* for July, 1870, Miss Mathilde Blind, with the aid of material furnished by Dr. Garnett, 'was enabled,' in the words of Mr. Buxton Forman, 'to supply omissions, make authoritative emendations, and controvert erroneous changes' in Mr. Rossetti's work; and in the more cautiously edited text of his later edition, published by Moxon in 1878, may be traced the influence of her strictures.

Six years later appeared a *variorum* edition in which for the first time Shelley's text was edited with scientific exactness of method, and with a due respect for the authority of the original editions. It would be difficult indeed to over-estimate the gains which have accrued to the lovers of Shelley from the strenuous labours of Mr. Harry Buxton Forman, C.B. He too has enlarged the body of Shelley's poetry¹; but, important as his additions undoubtedly are, it may safely be affirmed that his services in this direction constitute the least part of what we owe him. He has vindicated the authenticity of the text in many places, while in many others he has succeeded, with the aid of manuscripts, in

described as a nonce-word deliberately coined by Shelley 'on no better warrant than the exigency of the rhyme.' There can be little doubt that 'uprest' is simply an overlooked misprint for 'uprist'—not by any means a nonce-word, but a genuine English verbal substantive of regular formation, familiar to many from its employment by Chaucer. True, the corresponding rhyme-words in the passage above referred to are 'nest,' 'possessed,' 'breast'; but a laxity such as 'nest'—'uprist' is quite in Shelley's manner. Thus in this very poem we find 'midst'—'shed'st' (VI. xvi), 'mist'—'rest'—'blest' (V. lviii), 'loveliest'—'mist'—'kissed'—'dressed' (V. xliii). Shelley may have first seen the word in *The Ancient Mariner*; but he employs it more correctly than Coleridge, who seems to have mistaken it for a preterite-form (= 'uprose'), whereas in truth it serves either as the third person singular of the present (= 'upriseth'), or, as here, for the verbal substantive (= 'uprising').

¹ Mr. Forman's most notable addition is the second part of *The Daemon of the World*, which he printed privately in 1876, and included in his Library Edition of the *Poetical Works* published in the same year. See the *List of Editions*, &c. at the end of this volume.

restoring it. His untiring industry in research, his wide bibliographical knowledge and experience, above all, his accuracy, as invariable as it is minute, have combined to make him, in the words of Professor Dowden, 'our chief living authority on all that relates to Shelley's writings.' His name stands securely linked for all time to Shelley's by a long series of notable works, including three successive editions (1876, 1882, 1892) of the Poems, an edition of the Prose Remains, as well as many minor publications—a Bibliography (*The Shelley Library*, 1886) and several Facsimile Reprints of the early issues, edited for the Shelley Society.

To Professor Dowden, whose authoritative Biography of the poet, published in 1886, was followed in 1890 by an edition of the Poems (Macmillans), is due the addition of several pieces belonging to the juvenile period, incorporated by him in the pages of the *Life of Shelley*. Professor Dowden has also been enabled, with the aid of the manuscripts placed in his hands, to correct the text of the *Juvenilia* in many places. In 1893 Professor George E. Woodberry edited a *Centenary Edition of the Complete Poetical Works*, in which, to quote his own words, an attempt is made 'to summarize the labours of more than half a century on Shelley's text, and on his biography so far as the biography is bound up with the text.' In this Centenary edition the textual variations found in the Harvard College MSS., as well as those in the MSS. belonging to Mr. Frederickson of Brooklyn, are fully recorded. Professor Woodberry's text is conservative on the whole, but his revision of the punctuation is drastic, and occasionally sacrifices melody to perspicuity.

In 1903 Mr. C. D. Locock published, in a quarto volume of seventy-five pages, the fruits of a careful scrutiny of the Shelley MSS. now lodged in the Bodleian Library. Mr. Locock succeeded in recovering several inedited fragments of verse and prose. Amongst the poems chiefly concerned in the results of his *Examination* may be named *Marenghi*, *Prince Athanase*, *The Witch of Atlas*, *To Constantia*, the *Ode to Naples*, and (last, not least) *Prometheus Unbound*. Full use has been made in this edition of Mr. Locock's collations, and the fragments recovered and printed by him are included in the text. Variants derived from the Bodleian MSS. are marked *B.* in the footnotes.

On the state of the text generally, and the various quarters in which it lies open to conjectural emendation, I cannot do better than quote the following succinct and luminous account from a *Causerie* on the Shelley MSS. in the Bodleian Library, contributed by Dr. Richard Garnett, C.B., to the columns of *The Speaker* of December 19, 1903:—

'From the textual point of view Shelley's works may be divided into three classes—those published in his lifetime under his own direction; those also published in his lifetime, but in his absence from the press; and those published after his death. The first class includes *Queen Mab*, *The Revolt of Islam*, and *Alastor* with its appendages, published in England before his final departure for the continent; and *The Cenci* and *Adonais*, printed under his own eye at Leghorn and Pisa respectively. Except for some provoking but corrigible misprints in *The Revolt of Islam* and one crucial passage in *Alastor*, these poems afford little material for conjectural emendation; for the Alexandrines now and then left in the middle of stanzas in *The Revolt of Islam* must remain

untouched, as proceeding not from the printer's carelessness but the author's. The second class, poems printed during Shelley's lifetime, but not under his immediate inspection, comprise *Prometheus Unbound* and *Rosalind and Helen*, together with the pieces which accompanied them, *Epipsychidion*, *Hellas*, and *Swellfoot the Tyrant*. The correction of the most important of these, the *Prometheus*, was the least satisfactory. Shelley, though speaking plainly to the publisher, rather hints than expresses his dissatisfaction when writing to Gisborne, the corrector, but there is a pretty clear hint when on a subsequent occasion he says to him, "I have received *Hellas*, which is prettily printed, and with fewer mistakes than any poem I ever published." This also was probably not without influence on his determination to have *The Cenci* and *Adonais* printed in Italy. . . . Of the third class of Shelley's writings—those which were first published after his death—sufficient facsimiles have been published to prove that Trelawny's graphic description of the chaotic state of most of them was really in no respect exaggerated. . . . The difficulty is much augmented by the fact that these pieces are rarely consecutive, but literally *disiecti membra poetæ*, scattered through various notebooks in a way to require piecing together as well as deciphering. The editors of the Posthumous Poems, moreover, though diligent according to their light, were neither endowed with remarkable acumen nor possessed of the wide knowledge requisite for the full intelligence of so erudite a poet as Shelley, hence the perpetration of numerous mistakes. Some few of the MSS., indeed, such as those of *The Witch of Atlas*, *Julian and Maddalo*, and the *Lines at Naples*, were beautifully written out for the press in Shelley's best hand, but their very value and beauty necessitated the ordeal of transcription, with disastrous results in several instances. An entire line dropped out of the *Lines at Naples*, and although *Julian and Maddalo* was extant in more than one very clear copy, the printed text had several such sense-destroying errors as *least* for *lead*.

'The corrupt state of the text has stimulated the ingenuity of numerous correctors, who have suggested many acute and convincing emendations, and some very specious ones which sustained scrutiny has proved untenable. It should be needless to remark that success has in general been proportionate to the facilities of access to the MSS., which have only of late become generally available. If Shelley is less fortunate than most modern poets in the purity of his text, he is more fortunate than many in the preservation of his manuscripts. These have not, as regards a fair proportion, been destroyed or dispersed at auctions, but were protected from either fate by their very character as confused memoranda. As such they remained in the possession of Shelley's widow, and passed from her to her son and daughter-in-law. After Sir Percy Shelley's death, Lady Shelley took the occasion of the erection of the monument to Shelley at University College, Oxford, to present [certain of] the MSS. to the Bodleian Library, and verse and sculpture form an imperishable memorial of his connection with the University where his residence was so brief and troubled¹.'

¹ Dr. Garnett proceeds:—"The most important of the Bodleian MSS. is that of *Prometheus Unbound*, which, says Mr. Loeck, has the appearance of being an intermediate draft, and also the first copy made. This should confer considerable authority on its variations from the

In placing *Queen Mab* at the head of the *Juvenilia* I have followed the arrangement adopted by Mr. Buxton Forman in his Library Edition of 1876. I have excluded *The Wandering Jew*, having failed to satisfy myself of the sufficiency of the ground on which, in certain quarters, it is accepted as the work of Shelley. The shorter fragments are printed, as in Professor Dowden's edition of 1890, along with the miscellaneous poems of the years to which they severally belong, under titles which are sometimes borrowed from Mr. Buxton Forman, sometimes of my own choosing. I have added a few brief Editor's Notes, mainly on textual questions, at the end of the book. Of the poverty of my work in this direction I am painfully aware; but in the present edition the ordinary reader will, it is hoped, find an authentic, complete, and accurately printed text, and, if this be so, the principal end and aim of the OXFORD SHELLEY will have been attained.

I desire cordially to acknowledge the courtesy of Mr. H. Buxton Forman, C.B., by whose kind sanction the second part of *The Daemon of the World* appears in this volume. And I would fain express my deep sense of obligation for manifold information and guidance, derived from Mr. Buxton Forman's various editions, reprints and other publications—especially from the monumental Library Edition of 1876. Acknowledgements are also due to the poet's grandson, Charles E. J. Esdaile, Esq., for permission to include the early poems first printed in Professor Dowden's *Life of Shelley*; and to Mr. C. D. Locock, for leave to make full use of the material contained in his interesting and stimulating volume. To Dr. Richard Garnett, C.B., and to Professor Dowden, cordial thanks are hereby tendered for good counsel cheerfully bestowed. To two of the editors of the Shelley Society Reprints, Mr. Thomas J. Wise and Mr. Robert A. Potts—both generously communicative collectors—I am deeply indebted for the gift or loan of scarce volumes, as well as for many kind offices in other ways. Lastly, to the staff of the Oxford University Press my heartiest thanks are owing, for their unremitting care in all that relates to the printing and correcting of the sheets.

December, 1904.

THOMAS HUTCHINSON.

accepted text, as this appears to have been printed from a copy not made by Shelley himself. "My *Prometheus*," he writes to Ollier on September 6, 1819, "is now being transcribed," an expression which he would hardly have used if he had himself been the copyist. He wished the proofs to be sent to him in Italy for correction, but to this Ollier objected, and on May 14, 1820, Shelley signifies his acquiescence, adding, however, "In this case I shall repose trust in your care respecting the correction of the press; Mr. Gisborne will revise it; he heard it recited, and will therefore more readily seize any error." This confidence in the accuracy of Gisborne's verbal memory is touching! From a letter to Gisborne on May 26 following it appears that the offer to correct came from him, and that Shelley sent him "two little papers of corrections and additions," which were probably made use of, or the fact would have been made known. In the case of additions this may satisfactorily account for apparent omissions in the Bodleian MS. Gisborne, after all, did not prove fully up to the mark. "It is to be regretted," writes Shelley to Ollier on November 20, "that the errors of the press are so numerous," adding, "I shall send you the list of errata in a day or two." This was probably "the list of errata written by Shelley himself," from which Mrs. Shelley corrected the edition of 1839.²

PREFACE BY MRS. SHELLEY TO FIRST COLLECTED EDITION, 1839

OBSTACLES have long existed to my presenting the public with a perfect edition of Shelley's Poems. These being at last happily removed, I hasten to fulfil an important duty,—that of giving the productions of a sublime genius to the world, with all the correctness possible, and of, at the same time, detailing the history of those productions, as they sprang, living and warm, from his heart and brain. I abstain from any remark on the occurrences of his private life, except inasmuch as the passions which they engendered inspired his poetry. This is not the time to relate the truth; and I should reject any colouring of the truth. No account of these events has ever been given at all approaching reality in their details, either as regards himself or others; nor shall I further allude to them than to remark that the errors of action committed by a man as noble and generous as Shelley, may, as far as he only is concerned, be fearlessly avowed by those who loved him, in the firm conviction that, were they judged impartially, his character would stand in fairer and brighter light than that of any contemporary. Whatever faults he had ought to find extenuation among his fellows, since they prove him to be human; without them, the exalted nature of his soul would have raised him into something divine.

The qualities that struck any one newly introduced to Shelley were,—First, a gentle and cordial goodness that animated his intercourse with warm affection and helpful sympathy. The other, the eagerness and ardour with which he was attached to the cause of human happiness and improvement; and the fervent eloquence with which he discussed such subjects. His conversation was marked by its happy abundance, and the beautiful language in which he clothed his poetic ideas and philosophical notions. To defecate life of its misery and its evil was the ruling passion of his soul; he dedicated to it every power of his mind, every pulsation of his heart. He looked on political freedom as the direct agent to effect the happiness of mankind; and thus any new-sprung hope of liberty inspired a joy and an exultation more intense and wild than he could have felt for any personal advantage. Those who have never experienced the workings of passion on general and unselfish subjects cannot understand this; and it must be difficult of comprehension to the younger generation rising around, since they cannot remember the scorn and hatred with which the partisans of reform were regarded some few years ago, nor the persecutions to which they were exposed. He had been from youth the victim of the state of feeling inspired by the reaction of the French Revolution; and believing firmly in the justice and excellence of his views, it cannot be wondered that a nature as sensitive, as impetuous, and as generous as his, should put its whole force into the attempt to alleviate for others the evils of those systems from which he had himself suffered. Many advantages attended his birth; he spurned them all when balanced with what he considered his duties. He was generous to imprudence, devoted to heroism.

These characteristics breathe throughout his poetry. The struggle for human weal; the resolution firm to martyrdom; the impetuous pursuit, the glad triumph in good; the determination not to despair;—such were the

features that marked those of his works which he regarded with most complacency, as sustained by a lofty subject and useful aim.

In addition to these, his poems may be divided into two classes,—the purely imaginative, and those which sprang from the emotions of his heart. Among the former may be classed the *Witch of Atlas*, *Adonais*, and his latest composition, left imperfect, the *Triumph of Life*. In the first of these particularly he gave the reins to his fancy, and luxuriated in every idea as it rose; in all there is that sense of mystery which formed an essential portion of his perception of life—a clinging to the subtler inner spirit, rather than to the outward form—a curious and metaphysical anatomy of human passion and perception.

The second class is, of course, the more popular, as appealing at once to emotions common to us all; some of these rest on the passion of love; others on grief and despondency; others on the sentiments inspired by natural objects. Shelley's conception of love was exalted, absorbing, allied to all that is purest and noblest in our nature, and warmed by earnest passion; such it appears when he gave it a voice in verse. Yet he was usually averse to expressing these feelings, except when highly idealized; and many of his more beautiful effusions he had cast aside unfinished, and they were never seen by me till after I had lost him. Others, as for instance *Rosalind and Helen* and *Lines written among the Euganean Hills*, I found among his papers by chance; and with some difficulty urged him to complete them. There are others, such as the *Ode to the Skylark* and *The Cloud*, which, in the opinion of many critics, bear a purer poetical stamp than any other of his productions. They were written as his mind prompted: listening to the carolling of the bird, aloft in the azure sky of Italy; or marking the cloud as it sped across the heavens, while he floated in his boat on the Thames.

No poet was ever warmed by a more genuine and unforced inspiration. His extreme sensibility gave the intensity of passion to his intellectual pursuits; and rendered his mind keenly alive to every perception of outward objects, as well as to his internal sensations. Such a gift is, among the sad vicissitudes of human life, the disappointments we meet, and the galling sense of our own mistakes and errors, fraught with pain; to escape from such, he delivered up his soul to poetry, and felt happy when he sheltered himself, from the influence of human sympathies, in the wildest regions of fancy. His imagination has been termed too brilliant, his thoughts too subtle. He loved to idealize reality; and this is a taste shared by few. We are willing to have our passing whims exalted into passions, for this gratifies our vanity; but few of us understand or sympathize with the endeavour to ally the love of abstract beauty, and adoration of abstract good, the *τὸ ἀγαθὸν καὶ τὸ καλόν* of the Socratic philosophers, with our sympathies with our kind. In this, Shelley resembled Plato; both taking more delight in the abstract and the ideal than in the special and tangible. This did not result from imitation; for it was not till Shelley resided in Italy that he made Plato his study. He then translated his *Symposium* and his *Ion*; and the English language boasts of no more brilliant composition than Plato's Praise of Love translated by Shelley. To return to his own poetry. The luxury of imagination, which sought nothing beyond itself (as a child burdens itself with spring flowers, thinking of no use beyond the enjoyment of gathering them), often showed itself in his verses: they will be only appreciated by minds which have resemblance to his own; and the mystic subtlety of many of his thoughts will share the same fate. The metaphysical strain that charac-

terizes much of what he has written was, indeed, the portion of his works to which, apart from those whose scope was to awaken mankind to aspirations for what he considered the true and good, he was himself particularly attached. There is much, however, that speaks to the many. When he would consent to dismiss these huntings after the obscure (which, entwined with his nature as they were, he did with difficulty), no poet ever expressed in sweeter, more heart-reaching, or more passionate verse, the gentler or more forcible emotions of the soul.

A wise friend once wrote to Shelley: 'You are still very young, and in certain essential respects you do not yet sufficiently perceive that you are so.' It is seldom that the young know what youth is, till they have got beyond its period; and time was not given him to attain this knowledge. It must be remembered that there is the stamp of such inexperience on all he wrote; he had not completed his nine-and-twentieth year when he died. The calm of middle life did not add the seal of the virtues which adorn maturity to those generated by the vehement spirit of youth. Through life also he was a martyr to ill-health, and constant pain wound up his nerves to a pitch of susceptibility that rendered his views of life different from those of a man in the enjoyment of healthy sensations. Perfectly gentle and forbearing in manner, he suffered a good deal of internal irritability, or rather excitement, and his fortitude to bear was almost always on the stretch; and thus, during a short life, he had gone through more experience of sensation than many whose existence is protracted. 'If I die to-morrow,' he said, on the eve of his unanticipated death, 'I have lived to be older than my father.' The weight of thought and feeling burdened him heavily; you read his sufferings in his attenuated frame, while you perceived the mastery he held over them in his animated countenance and brilliant eyes.

He died, and the world showed no outward sign. But his influence over mankind, though slow in growth, is fast augmenting; and, in the ameliorations that have taken place in the political state of his country, we may trace in part the operation of his arduous struggles. His spirit gathers peace in its new state from the sense that, though late, his exertions were not made in vain, and in the progress of the liberty he so fondly loved.

He died, and his place, among those who knew him intimately, has never been filled up. He walked beside them like a spirit of good to comfort and benefit—to enlighten the darkness of life with irradiations of genius, to cheer it with his sympathy and love. Any one, once attached to Shelley, must feel all other affections, however true and fond, as wasted on barren soil in comparison. It is our best consolation to know that such a pure-minded and exalted being was once among us, and now exists where we hope one day to join him;—although the intolerant, in their blindness, poured down anathemas, the Spirit of Good, who can judge the heart, never rejected him.

In the notes appended to the poems I have endeavoured to narrate the origin and history of each. The loss of nearly all letters and papers which refer to his early life renders the execution more imperfect than it would otherwise have been. I have, however, the liveliest recollection of all that was done and said during the period of my knowing him. Every impression is as clear as if stamped yesterday, and I have no apprehension of any mistake in my statements as far as they go. In other respects I am indeed incompetent: but I feel the importance of the task, and regard it as my most sacred duty.

I endeavour to fulfil it in a manner he would himself approve; and hope, in this publication, to lay the first stone of a monument due to Shelley's genius, his sufferings, and his virtues:

Se al seguir son tarda,
Forse avverrà che 'l bel nome gentile
Consacrerò con questa stanca penna.

POSTSCRIPT IN SECOND EDITION OF 1839

IN revising this new edition, and carefully consulting Shelley's scattered and confused papers, I found a few fragments which had hitherto escaped me, and was enabled to complete a few poems hitherto left unfinished. What at one times escapes the searching eye, dimmed by its own earnestness, becomes clear at a future period. By the aid of a friend, I also present some poems complete and correct which hitherto have been defaced by various mistakes and omissions. It was suggested that the poem *To the Queen of my Heart* was falsely attributed to Shelley. I certainly find no trace of it among his papers; and, as those of his intimate friends whom I have consulted never heard of it, I omit it.

Two poems are added of some length, *Swellfoot the Tyrant* and *Peter Bell the Third*. I have mentioned the circumstances under which they were written in the notes; and need only add that they are conceived in a very different spirit from Shelley's usual compositions. They are specimens of the burlesque and fanciful; but, although they adopt a familiar style and homely imagery, there shine through the radiance of the poet's imagination the earnest views and opinions of the politician and the moralist.

At my request the publisher has restored the omitted passages of *Queen Mab*. I now present this edition as a complete collection of my husband's poetical works, and I do not foresee that I can hereafter add to or take away a word or line.

PUTNEY

November 6, 1839.

PREFACE BY MRS. SHELLEY
TO THE VOLUME OF POSTHUMOUS POEMS
PUBLISHED IN 1824

*In nobil sangue vita umile e queta,
Ed in alto intelletto un puro core;
Frutto senile in sul giovenil fiore,
E in aspetto pensoso anima lieta.*—PETRARCA.

It had been my wish, on presenting the public with the Posthumous Poems of Mr. Shelley, to have accompanied them by a biographical notice; as it appeared to me that at this moment a narration of the events of my husband's life would come more gracefully from other hands than mine, I applied to Mr. Leigh Hunt. The distinguished friendship that Mr. Shelley felt for him, and the enthusiastic affection with which Mr. Leigh Hunt clings to his friend's memory, seemed to point him out as the person best calculated for such an undertaking. His absence from this country, which prevented our mutual explanation, has unfortunately rendered my scheme abortive. I do not doubt but that on some other occasion he will pay this tribute to his lost friend, and sincerely regret that the volume which I edit has not been honoured by its insertion.

The comparative solitude in which Mr. Shelley lived was the occasion that he was personally known to few; and his fearless enthusiasm in the cause which he considered the most sacred upon earth, the improvement of the moral and physical state of mankind, was the chief reason why he, like other illustrious reformers, was pursued by hatred and calumny. No man was ever more devoted than he to the endeavour of making those around him happy; no man ever possessed friends more unfeignedly attached to him. The ungrateful world did not feel his loss, and the gap it made seemed to close as quickly over his memory as the murderous sea above his living frame. Hereafter men will lament that his transcendent powers of intellect were extinguished before they had bestowed on them their choicest treasures. To his friends his loss is irremediable: the wise, the brave, the gentle, is gone for ever! He is to them as a bright vision, whose radiant track, left behind in the memory, is worth all the realities that society can afford. Before the critics contradict me, let them appeal to any one who had ever known him. To see him was to love him: and his presence, like Ithuriel's spear, was alone sufficient to disclose the falsehood of the tale which his enemies whispered in the ear of the ignorant world.

His life was spent in the contemplation of Nature, in arduous study, or in acts of kindness and affection. He was an elegant scholar and a profound metaphysician; without possessing much scientific knowledge, he was unrivalled in the justness and extent of his observations on natural objects; he knew every plant by its name, and was familiar with the history and habits of every production of the earth; he could interpret without a fault each appearance in the sky; and the varied phenomena of heaven and earth filled him with deep emotion. He made his study and reading-room of the shadowed copse, the stream, the lake, and the waterfall. Ill health and continual pain preyed upon his powers; and the solitude in which we lived, particularly on

our first arrival in Italy, although congenial to his feelings, must frequently have weighed upon his spirits; those beautiful and affecting *Lines written in Dejection near Naples* were composed at such an interval; but, when in health, his spirits were buoyant and youthful to an extraordinary degree.

Such was his love for Nature that every page of his poetry is associated, in the minds of his friends, with the loveliest scenes of the countries which he inhabited. In early life he visited the most beautiful parts of this country and Ireland. Afterwards the Alps of Switzerland became his inspirers. *Prometheus Unbound* was written among the deserted and flower-grown ruins of Rome; and, when he made his home under the Pisan hills, their roofless recesses harboured him as he composed the *Witch of Atlas*, *Adonais*, and *Hellas*. In the wild but beautiful Bay of Spezzia, the winds and waves which he loved became his playmates. His days were chiefly spent on the water; the management of his boat, its alterations and improvements, were his principal occupation. At night, when the unclouded moon shone on the calm sea, he often went alone in his little shallop to the rocky caves that bordered it, and, sitting beneath their shelter, wrote the *Triumph of Life*, the last of his productions. The beauty but strangeness of this lonely place, the refined pleasure which he felt in the companionship of a few selected friends, our entire sequestration from the rest of the world, all contributed to render this period of his life one of continued enjoyment. I am convinced that the two months we passed there were the happiest which he had ever known: his health even rapidly improved, and he was never better than when I last saw him, full of spirits and joy, embark for Leghorn, that he might there welcome Leigh Hunt to Italy. I was to have accompanied him; but illness confined me to my room, and thus put the seal on my misfortune. His vessel bore out of sight with a favourable wind, and I remained awaiting his return by the breakers of that sea which was about to engulf him.

He spent a week at Pisa, employed in kind offices toward his friend, and enjoying with keen delight the renewal of their intercourse. He then embarked with Mr. Williams, the chosen and beloved sharer of his pleasures and of his fate, to return to us. We waited for them in vain; the sea by its restless moaning seemed to desire to inform us of what we would not learn:—but a veil may well be drawn over such misery. The real anguish of those moments transcended all the fictions that the most glowing imagination ever portrayed; our seclusion, the savage nature of the inhabitants of the surrounding villages, and our immediate vicinity to the troubled sea, combined to imbue with strange horror our days of uncertainty. The truth was at last known,—a truth that made our loved and lovely Italy appear a tomb, its sky a pall. Every heart echoed the deep lament, and my only consolation was in the praise and earnest love that each voice bestowed and each countenance demonstrated for him we had lost,—not, I fondly hope, for ever; his unearthly and elevated nature is a pledge of the continuation of his being, although in an altered form. Rome received his ashes; they are deposited beneath its weed-grown wall, and ‘the world’s sole monument’ is enriched by his remains.

I must add a few words concerning the contents of this volume. *Julian and Maddalo*, the *Witch of Atlas*, and most of the *Translations*, were written some years ago; and, with the exception of the *Cyclops*, and the Scenes from the *Magico Prodigioso*, may be considered as having received the author’s ultimate corrections. The *Triumph of Life* was his last work, and was left in so

unfinished a state that I arranged it in its present form with great difficulty. All his poems which were scattered in periodical works are collected in this volume, and I have added a reprint of *Alastor, or the Spirit of Solitude*: the difficulty with which a copy can be obtained is the cause of its republication. Many of the Miscellaneous Poems, written on the spur of the occasion, and never retouched, I found among his manuscript books, and have carefully copied. I have subjoined, whenever I have been able, the date of their composition.

I do not know whether the critics will reprehend the insertion of some of the most imperfect among them; but I frankly own that I have been more actuated by the fear lest any monument of his genius should escape me than the wish of presenting nothing but what was complete to the fastidious reader. I feel secure that the lovers of Shelley's poetry (who know how, more than any poet of the present day, every line and word he wrote is instinct with peculiar beauty) will pardon and thank me: I consecrate this volume to them.

The size of this collection has prevented the insertion of any prose pieces. They will hereafter appear in a separate publication.

LONDON

June 1, 1824.

MARY W. SHELLEY.

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THE DAEMON OF THE WORLD

A FRAGMENT

PART I

[Sections i and ii of *Queen Mab* rehandled, and published by Shelley in the *Alastor* volume, 1816. See *Bibliographical List*, and the Editor's *Introductory Note to Queen Mab*.]

Nec tantum prodere vati,
Quantum scire licet. Venit aetas omnis in unam
Congeriem, miserumque premunt tot saecula pectus.

LUCAN, *Phars.* v. 176.

How wonderful is Death,
Death and his brother Sleep!
One pale as yonder wan and hornèd moon,
With lips of lurid blue,
The other glowing like the vital morn, 5
When throned on ocean's wave
It breathes over the world:
Yet both so passing strange and wonderful!
Hath then the iron-sceptred Skeleton,
Whose reign is in the tainted sepulchres, 10
To the hell dogs that couch beneath his throne
Cast that fair prey? Must that divinest form,
Which love and admiration cannot view
Without a beating heart, whose azure veins
Steal like dark streams along a field of snow, 15
Whose outline is as fair as marble clothed
In light of some sublimest mind, decay?
Nor putrefaction's breath
Leave aught of this pure spectacle
But loathsomeness and ruin?— 20
Spare aught but a dark theme,
On which the lightest heart might moralize?
Or is it but that downy-wingèd slumbers
Have charmed their nurse coy Silence near her lids
To watch their own repose? 25
Will they, when morning's beam
Flows through those wells of light,
Seek far from noise and day some western cave,
Where woods and streams with soft and pausing winds
A lulling murmur weave?— 30
Ianthe doth not sleep
The dreamless sleep of death:
Nor in her moonlight chamber silently
Doth Henry hear her regular pulses throb,
Or mark her delicate cheek 35
With interchange of hues mock the broad moon,
Outwatching weary night,

Without assured reward.
 Her dewy eyes are closed ;
 On their translucent lids, whose texture fine 40
 Scarce hides the dark blue orbs that burn below
 With unapparent fire,
 The baby Sleep is pillowed :
 Her golden tresses shade
 The bosom's stainless pride, 45
 Twining like tendrils of the parasite
 Around a marble column.

 Hark ! whence that rushing sound ?
 'Tis like a wondrous strain that sweeps
 Around a lonely ruin 50
 When west winds sigh and evening waves respond
 In whispers from the shore :
 'Tis wilder than the unmeasured notes
 Which from the unseen lyres of dells and groves
 The genii of the breezes sweep. 55
 Floating on waves of music and of light,
 The chariot of the Daemon of the World
 Descends in silent power :
 Its shape reposed within : slight as some cloud
 That catches but the palest tinge of day 60
 When evening yields to night,
 Bright as that fibrous woof when stars indue
 Its transitory robe.
 Four shapeless shadows bright and beautiful
 Draw that strange car of glory, reins of light 65
 Check their unearthly speed ; they stop and fold
 Their wings of braided air :
 The Daemon leaning from the ethereal car
 Gazed on the slumbering maid.
 Human eye hath ne'er beheld 70
 A shape so wild, so bright, so beautiful,
 As that which o'er the maiden's charmed sleep
 Waving a starry wand,
 Hung like a mist of light.
 Such sounds as breathed around like odorous winds 75
 Of wakening spring arose,
 Filling the chamber and the moonlight sky.
 Maiden, the world's supremest spirit
 Beneath the shadow of her wings
 Folds all thy memory doth inherit 80
 From ruin of divinest things,
 Feelings that lure thee to betray,
 And light of thoughts that pass away.

 For thou hast earned a mighty boon,
 The truths which wisest poets see 85
 Dimly, thy mind may make its own,

Rewarding its own majesty,
 Entranced in some diviner mood
 Of self-oblivious solitude.

Custom, and Faith, and Power thou spurnest ; 90
 From hate and awe thy heart is free ;
 Ardent and pure as day thou burnest,
 For dark and cold mortality
 A living light, to cheer it long,
 The watch-fires of the world among. 95

Therefore from nature's inner shrine,
 Where gods and fiends in worship bend,
 Majestic spirit, be it thine
 The flame to seize, the veil to rend,
 Where the vast snake Eternity 100
 In charmed sleep doth ever lie.

All that inspires thy voice of love,
 Or speaks in thy unclosing eyes,
 Or through thy frame doth burn or move,
 Or think or feel, awake, arise! 105
 Spirit, leave for mine and me
 Earth's unsubstantial mimicry!

It ceased, and from the mute and moveless frame
 A radiant spirit arose,
 All beautiful in naked purity. 110
 Robed in its human hues it did ascend,
 Disparting as it went the silver clouds,
 It moved towards the car, and took its seat
 Beside the Daemon shape.

Obedient to the sweep of æry song, 115
 The mighty ministers
 Unfurled their prismatic wings.
 The magic car moved on ;
 The night was fair, innumerable stars
 Studded heaven's dark blue vault ; 120
 The eastern wave grew pale
 With the first smile of morn.
 The magic car moved on.

From the swift sweep of wings
 The atmosphere in flaming sparkles flew ; 125
 And where the burning wheels
 Eddied above the mountain's loftiest peak
 Was traced a line of lightning.
 Now far above a rock the utmost verge
 Of the wide earth it flew, 130
 The rival of the Andes, whose dark brow
 Frowned o'er the silver sea.

Far, far below the chariot's stormy path, Calm as a slumbering babe, Tremendous ocean lay.	135
Its broad and silent mirror gave to view The pale and waning stars, The chariot's fiery track, And the grey light of morn Tingeing those fleecy clouds	140
That cradled in their folds the infant dawn. The chariot seemed to fly Through the abyss of an immense concave, Radiant with million constellations, tinged With shades of infinite colour, And semicircled with a belt Flashing incessant meteors.	145
As they approached their goal, The wingèd shadows seemed to gather speed. The sea no longer was distinguished; earth Appeared a vast and shadowy sphere, suspended In the black concave of heaven With the sun's cloudless orb, Whose rays of rapid light Parted around the chariot's swifter course, And fell like ocean's feathery spray Dashed from the boiling surge Before a vessel's prow.	150
The magic car moved on. Earth's distant orb appeared The smallest light that twinkles in the heavens, Whilst round the chariot's way Innumerable systems widely rolled, And countless spheres diffused An ever varying glory.	155
It was a sight of wonder! Some were horned, And like the moon's argentine crescent hung In the dark dome of heaven; some did shed A clear mild beam like Hesperus, while the sea Yet glows with fading sunlight; others dashed Athwart the night with trains of bickering fire, Like spherèd worlds to death and ruin driven; Some shone like stars, and as the chariot passed Bedimmed all other light.	160
Spirit of Nature! here In this interminable wilderness Of worlds, at whose involved immensity Even soaring fancy staggers, Here is thy fitting temple. Yet not the lightest leaf	165
	170
	175
	180

That quivers to the passing breeze
 Is less instinct with thee,—
 Yet not the meanest worm,
 That lurks in graves and fattens on the dead,
 Less shares thy eternal breath. 185
 Spirit of Nature! thou
 Imperishable as this glorious scene,
 Here is thy fitting temple.

If solitude hath ever led thy steps
 To the shore of the immeasurable sea, 190
 And thou hast lingered there
 Until the sun's broad orb
 Seemed resting on the fiery line of ocean,
 Thou must have marked the braided webs of gold
 That without motion hang 195
 Over the sinking sphere:
 Thou must have marked the billowy mountain clouds,
 Edged with intolerable radiancy,
 Towering like rocks of jet
 Above the burning deep: 200
 And yet there is a moment
 When the sun's highest point
 Peers like a star o'er ocean's western edge,
 When those far clouds of feathery purple gleam
 Like fairy lands girt by some heavenly sea: 205
 Then has thy rapt imagination soared
 Where in the midst of all existing things
 The temple of the mightiest Daemon stands.

Yet not the golden islands
 That gleam amid yon flood of purple light, 210
 Nor the feathery curtains
 That canopy the sun's resplendent couch,
 Nor the burnished ocean waves
 Paving that gorgeous dome,
 So fair, so wonderful a sight 215
 As the eternal temple could afford.
 The elements of all that human thought
 Can frame of lovely or sublime, did join
 To rear the fabric of the fane, nor aught
 Of earth may image forth its majesty. 220
 Yet likest evening's vault that faëry hall,
 As heaven low resting on the wave it spread
 Its floors of flashing light,
 Its vast and azure dome;
 And on the verge of that obscure abyss 225
 Where crystal battlements o'erhang the gulf
 Of the dark world, ten thousand spheres diffuse
 Their lustre through its adamantine gates.

The magic car no longer moved;
 The Daemon and the Spirit 230
 Entered the eternal gates.
 Those clouds of æry gold
 That slept in glittering billows
 Beneath the azure canopy,
 With the ethereal footsteps trembled not; 235
 While slight and odorous mists
 Floated to strains of thrilling melody
 Through the vast columns and the pearly shrines.

The Daemon and the Spirit
 Approached the overhanging battlement, 240
 Below lay stretched the boundless universe!
 There, far as the remotest line
 That limits swift imagination's flight,
 Unending orbs mingled in mazy motion, 245
 Immutably fulfilling
 Eternal Nature's law.
 Above, below, around,
 The circling systems formed
 A wilderness of harmony.
 Each with undeviating aim 250
 In eloquent silence through the depths of space
 Pursued its wondrous way.—

Awhile the Spirit paused in ecstasy.
 Yet soon she saw, as the vast spheres swept by,
 Strange things within their belted orbs appear. 255
 Like animated frenzies, dimly moved
 Shadows, and skeletons, and fiendly shapes,
 Thronging round human graves, and o'er the dead
 Sculpturing records for each memory
 In verse, such as malignant gods pronounce, 260
 Blasting the hopes of men, when heaven and hell
 Confounded burst in ruin o'er the world:
 And they did build vast trophies, instruments
 Of murder, human bones, barbaric gold,
 Skins torn from living men, and towers of skulls 265
 With sightless holes gazing on blinder heaven,
 Mitres, and crowns, and brazen chariots stained
 With blood, and scrolls of mystic wickedness,
 The sanguine codes of venerable crime.
 The likeness of a thronèd king came by, 270
 When these had passed, bearing upon his brow
 A threefold crown; his countenance was calm,
 His eye severe and cold; but his right hand
 Was charged with bloody coin, and he did gnaw
 By fits, with secret smiles, a human heart 275
 Concealed beneath his robe; and motley shapes,
 A multitudinous throng, around him knelt,

With bosoms bare, and bowed heads, and false looks
 Of true submission, as the sphere rolled by.
 Brooking no eye to witness their foul shame, 280
 Which human hearts must feel, while human tongues
 Tremble to speak, they did rage horribly,
 Breathing in self-contempt fierce blasphemies
 Against the Daemon of the World, and high
 Hurling their armed hands where the pure Spirit, 285
 Serene and inaccessibly secure,
 Stood on an isolated pinnacle,
 The flood of ages combating below,
 The depth of the unbounded universe
 Above, and all around 290
 Necessity's unchanging harmony.

PART II

[Sections viii and ix of *Queen Mab* rehandled by Shelley. First printed in 1876 by Mr. H. Buxton Forman, C.B., by whose kind permission it is here reproduced. See Editor's *Introductory Note* to *Queen Mab*.]

O HAPPY Earth! reality of Heaven!
 To which those restless powers that ceaselessly
 Throng through the human universe aspire;
 Thou consummation of all mortal hope! 295
 Thou glorious prize of blindly-working will!
 Whose rays, diffused throughout all space and time,
 Verge to one point and blend for ever there:
 Of purest spirits thou pure dwelling-place!
 Where care and sorrow, impotence and crime, 300
 Languor, disease, and ignorance dare not come:
 O happy Earth, reality of Heaven!

Genius has seen thee in her passionate dreams,
 And dim forebodings of thy loveliness,
 Haunting the human heart, have there entwined 305
 Those rooted hopes, that the proud Power of Evil
 Shall not for ever on this fairest world
 Shake pestilence and war, or that his slaves
 With blasphemy for prayer, and human blood
 For sacrifice, before his shrine for ever 310
 In adoration bend, or Erebus
 With all its banded fiends shall not uprising
 To overwhelm in envy and revenge
 The dauntless and the good, who dare to hurl
 Defiance at his throne, girt tho' it be 315
 With Death's omnipotence. Thou hast beheld
 His empire, o'er the present and the past;
 It was a desolate sight—now gaze on mine,
 Futurity. Thou hoary giant Time,
 Render thou up thy half-devoured babes,— 320

And from the cradles of eternity,
 Where millions lie lulled to their portioned sleep
 By the deep murmuring stream of passing things,
 Tear thou that gloomy shroud.—Spirit, behold
 Thy glorious destiny!

The Spirit saw 325

The vast frame of the renovated world
 Smile in the lap of Chaos, and the sense
 Of hope thro' her fine texture did suffuse
 Such varying glow, as summer evening casts
 On undulating clouds and deepening lakes. 330
 Like the vague sighings of a wind at even,
 That wakes the wavelets of the slumbering sea
 And dies on the creation of its breath,
 And sinks and rises, fails and swells by fits,
 Was the sweet stream of thought that with wild motion 335
 Flowed o'er the Spirit's human sympathies.
 The mighty tide of thought had paused awhile,
 Which from the Daemon now like Ocean's stream
 Again began to pour.—

To me is given 340

The wonders of the human world to keep—
 Space, matter, time and mind—let the sight
 Renew and strengthen all thy failing hope.
 All things are recreated, and the flame
 Of consentaneous love inspires all life:
 The fertile bosom of the earth gives suck 345
 To myriads, who still grow beneath her care,
 Rewarding her with their pure perfectness:
 The balmy breathings of the wind inhale
 Her virtues, and diffuse them all abroad:
 Health floats amid the gentle atmosphere, 350
 Glows in the fruits, and mantles on the stream;
 No storms deform the beaming brow of heaven,
 Nor scatter in the freshness of its pride
 The foliage of the undecaying trees;
 But fruits are ever ripe, flowers ever fair, 355
 And Autumn proudly bears her matron grace,
 Kindling a flush on the fair cheek of Spring,
 Whose virgin bloom beneath the ruddy fruit
 Reflects its tint and blushes into love.

The habitable earth is full of bliss; 360

Those wastes of frozen billows that were hurled
 By everlasting snow-storms round the poles,
 Where matter dared not vegetate nor live,
 But ceaseless frost round the vast solitude
 Bound its broad zone of stillness, are unloosed; 365
 And fragrant zephyrs there from spicy isles

Ruffle the placid ocean-deep, that rolls
 Its broad, bright surges to the sloping sand,
 Whose roar is wakened into echoings sweet
 To murmur through the heaven-breathing groves 370
 And melodise with man's blest nature there.

The vast tract of the parched and sandy waste
 Now teems with countless rills and shady woods,
 Corn-fields and pastures and white cottages;
 And where the startled wilderness did hear 375
 A savage conqueror stained in kindred blood,
 Hymning his victory, or the milder snake
 Crushing the bones of some frail antelope
 Within his brazen folds—the dewy lawn,
 Offering sweet incense to the sunrise, smiles 380
 To see a babe before his mother's door,
 Share with the green and golden basilisk
 That comes to lick his feet, his morning's meal.

Those trackless deeps, where many a weary sail
 Has seen, above the illimitable plain, 385
 Morning on night and night on morning rise,
 Whilst still no land to greet the wanderer spread
 Its shadowy mountains on the sunbright sea,
 Where the loud roarings of the tempest-waves
 So long have mingled with the gusty wind 390
 In melancholy loneliness, and swept
 The desert of those ocean solitudes,
 But vocal to the sea-bird's harrowing shriek,
 The bellowing monster, and the rushing storm,
 Now to the sweet and many-mingling sounds 395
 Of kindest human impulses respond:
 Those lonely realms bright garden-isles begem,
 With lightsome clouds and shining seas between,
 And fertile valleys, resonant with bliss,
 Whilst green woods overcanopy the wave, 400
 Which like a toil-worn labourer leaps to shore,
 To meet the kisses of the flowerets there.

Man chief perceives the change, his being notes
 The gradual renovation, and defines 405
 Each movement of its progress on his mind.
 Man, where the gloom of the long polar night
 Lowered o'er the snow-clad rocks and frozen soil,
 Where scarce the hardest herb that braves the frost
 Basked in the moonlight's ineffectual glow,
 Shrank with the plants, and darkened with the night; 410
 Nor where the tropics bound the realms of day
 With a broad belt of mingling cloud and flame,
 Where blue mists through the unmoving atmosphere
 Scattered the seeds of pestilence, and fed

Unnatural vegetation, where the land 415
Teemed with all earthquake, tempest and disease,
Was man a nobler being; slavery
Had crushed him to his country's blood-stained dust.

Even where the milder zone afforded man
A seeming shelter, yet contagion there, 420
Blighting his being with unnumbered ills,
Spread like a quenchless fire; nor truth availed
Till late to arrest its progress, or create
That peace which first in bloodless victory waved
Her snowy standard o'er this favoured clime: 425
There man was long the train-bearer of slaves,
The mimic of surrounding misery,
The jackal of ambition's lion-rage,
The bloodhound of religion's hungry zeal.

Here now the human being stands adorning 430
This loveliest earth with taintless body and mind;
Blest from his birth with all bland impulses,
Which gently in his noble bosom wake
All kindly passions and all pure desires.
Him, still from hope to hope the bliss pursuing, 435
Which from the exhaustless lore of human weal
Dawns on the virtuous mind, the thoughts that rise
In time-destroying infiniteness gift
With self-enshrined eternity, that mocks
The unprevailing hoariness of age, 440
And man, once fleeting o'er the transient scene
Swift as an unremembered vision, stands
Immortal upon earth: no longer now
He slays the beast that sports around his dwelling
And horribly devours its mangled flesh, 445
Or drinks its vital blood, which like a stream
Of poison thro' his fevered veins did flow
Feeding a plague that secretly consumed
His feeble frame, and kindling in his mind
Hatred, despair, and fear and vain belief, 450
The germs of misery, death, disease, and crime.
No longer now the winged habitants,
That in the woods their sweet lives sing away,
Flee from the form of man; but gather round,
And prune their sunny feathers on the hands 455
Which little children stretch in friendly sport
Towards these dreadless partners of their play.
All things are void of terror: man has lost
His desolating privilege, and stands
An equal amidst equals: happiness 460
And science dawn though late upon the earth;
Peace cheers the mind, health renovates the frame;

Disease and pleasure cease to mingle here,
 Reason and passion cease to combat there;
 Whilst mind unfettered o'er the earth extends
 465 Its all-subduing energies, and wields
 The sceptre of a vast dominion there.

Mild is the slow necessity of death:
 The tranquil spirit fails beneath its grasp,
 Without a groan, almost without a fear,
 470 Resigned in peace to the necessity,
 Calm as a voyager to some distant land,
 And full of wonder, full of hope as he.
 The deadly germs of languor and disease
 Waste in the human frame, and Nature gifts
 475 With choicest boons her human worshippers.
 How vigorous now the athletic form of age!
 How clear its open and unwrinkled brow!
 Where neither avarice, cunning, pride, or care,
 480 Had stamped the seal of grey deformity
 On all the mingling lineaments of time.
 How lovely the intrepid front of youth!
 How sweet the smiles of taintless infancy.

Within the massy prison's mouldering courts,
 Fearless and free the ruddy children play,
 485 Weaving gay chaplets for their innocent brows
 With the green ivy and the red wall-flower,
 That mock the dungeon's unavailing gloom;
 The ponderous chains, and gratings of strong iron,
 490 There rust amid the accumulated ruins
 Now mingling slowly with their native earth:
 There the broad beam of day, which feebly once
 Lighted the cheek of lean captivity
 With a pale and sickly glare, now freely shines
 495 On the pure smiles of infant playfulness:
 No more the shuddering voice of hoarse despair
 Peals through the echoing vaults, but soothing notes
 Of ivy-fingered winds and gladsome birds
 And merriment are resonant around.

The fanes of Fear and Falsehood hear no more
 500 The voice that once waked multitudes to war
 Thundering thro' all their aisles: but now respond
 To the death dirge of the melancholy wind:
 It were a sight of awfulness to see
 The works of faith and slavery, so vast,
 505 So sumptuous, yet withal so perishing!
 Even as the corpse that rests beneath their wall.
 A thousand mourners deck the pomp of death
 To-day, the breathing marble glows above
 510 To decorate its memory, and tongues

Are busy of its life: to-morrow, worms
 In silence and in darkness seize their prey.
 These ruins soon leave not a wreck behind:
 Their elements, wide-scattered o'er the globe,
 To happier shapes are moulded, and become 515
 Ministrant to all blissful impulses:
 Thus human things are perfected, and earth,
 Even as a child beneath its mother's love,
 Is strengthened in all excellence, and grows
 Fairer and nobler with each passing year. 520

Now Time his dusky pennons o'er the scene
 Closes in steadfast darkness, and the past
 Fades from our charmed sight. My task is done:
 Thy lore is learned. Earth's wonders are thine own,
 With all the fear and all the hope they bring. 525
 My spells are past: the present now recurs.
 Ah me! a pathless wilderness remains
 Yet unsubdued by man's reclaiming hand.

Yet, human Spirit, bravely hold thy course,
 Let virtue teach thee firmly to pursue 530
 The gradual paths of an aspiring change:
 For birth and life and death, and that strange state
 Before the naked powers that thro' the world
 Wander like winds have found a human home,
 All tend to perfect happiness, and urge 535
 The restless wheels of being on their way,
 Whose flashing spokes, instinct with infinite life,
 Bicker and burn to gain their destined goal:
 For birth but wakes the universal mind
 Whose mighty streams might else in silence flow 540
 Thro' the vast world, to individual sense
 Of outward shows, whose unexperienced shape
 New modes of passion to its frame may lend;
 Life is its state of action, and the store
 Of all events is aggregated there 545
 That variegate the eternal universe;
 Death is a gate of dreariness and gloom,
 That leads to azure isles and beaming skies
 And happy regions of eternal hope.
 Therefore, O Spirit! fearlessly bear on: 550
 Though storms may break the primrose on its stalk,
 Though frosts may blight the freshness of its bloom,
 Yet spring's awakening breath will woo the earth,
 To feed with kindest dews its favourite flower,
 That blooms in mossy banks and darksome glens, 555
 Lighting the green wood with its sunny smile.

Fear not then, Spirit, death's disrobing hand,
 So welcome when the tyrant is awake,

So welcome when the bigot's hell-torch flares ;
 'Tis but the voyage of a darksome hour,
 The transient gulf-dream of a startling sleep. 560
 For what thou art shall perish utterly,
 But what is thine may never cease to be ;
 Death is no foe to virtue: earth has seen
 Love's brightest roses on the scaffold bloom,
 Mingling with freedom's fadeless laurels there, 565
 And presaging the truth of visioned bliss.
 Are there not hopes within thee, which this scene
 Of linked and gradual being has confirmed ?
 Hopes that not vainly thou, and living fires 570
 Of mind as radiant and as pure as thou,
 Have shone upon the paths of men—return,
 Surpassing Spirit, to that world, where thou
 Art destined an eternal war to wage
 With tyranny and falsehood, and uproot 575
 The germs of misery from the human heart.
 Thine is the hand whose piety would soothe
 The thorny pillow of unhappy crime,
 Whose impotence an easy pardon gains,
 Watching its wanderings as a friend's disease: 580
 Thine is the brow whose mildness would defy
 Its fiercest rage, and brave its sternest will,
 When fenced by power and master of the world.
 Thou art sincere and good ; of resolute mind,
 Free from heart-withering custom's cold control, 585
 Of passion lofty, pure and unsubdued.
 Earth's pride and meanness could not vanquish thee,
 And therefore art thou worthy of the boon
 Which thou hast now received: virtue shall keep
 Thy footsteps in the path that thou hast trod, 590
 And many days of beaming hope shall bless
 Thy spotless life of sweet and sacred love.
 Go, happy one, and give that bosom joy
 Whose sleepless spirit waits to catch
 Light, life and rapture from thy smile. 595

The Daemon called its wingèd ministers.
 Speechless with bliss the Spirit mounts the car,
 That rolled beside the crystal battlement,
 Bending her beamy eyes in thankfulness.

The burning wheels inflame 600
 The steep descent of Heaven's untrodden way.

Fast and far the chariot flew:
 The mighty globes that rolled
 Around the gate of the Eternal Fane
 Lessened by slow degrees, and soon appeared 605
 Such tiny twinklers as the planet orbs
 That ministering on the solar power

With borrowed light pursued their narrower way.
 Earth floated then below:
 The chariot paused a moment;
 The Spirit then descended:
 And from the earth departing
 The shadows with swift wings
 Speeded like thought upon the light of Heaven.

610

The Body and the Soul united then,
 A gentle start convulsed Ianthe's frame:
 Her veiny eyelids quietly unclosed;
 Moveless awhile the dark blue orbs remained:
 She looked around in wonder and beheld
 Henry, who kneeled in silence by her couch,
 Watching her sleep with looks of speechless love,
 And the bright beaming stars
 That through the casement shone.

615

620

ALASTOR

OR

THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE

[Composed at Bishopsgate Heath, near Windsor Park, 1815 (autumn); published, as the title-piece of a slender volume containing other poems (see *Bibliographical List*, by Baldwin, Cradock and Joy, London, 1816 (March)). Reprinted—the first edition being sold out—amongst the *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. Sources of the text are (1) the *editio princeps*, 1816; (2) *Posth. Poems*, 1824; (3) *Poetical Works*, 1839, edd. 1st and 2nd. For (2) and (3) Mrs. Shelley is responsible.]

PREFACE

THE poem entitled *Alastor* may be considered as allegorical of one of the most interesting situations of the human mind. It represents a youth of uncorrupted feelings and adventurous genius led forth by an imagination inflamed and purified through familiarity with all that is excellent and majestic, to the contemplation of the universe. He drinks deep of the fountains of knowledge, and is still insatiate. The magnificence and beauty of the external world sinks profoundly into the frame of his conceptions, and affords to their modifications a variety not to be exhausted. So long as it is possible for his desires to point towards objects thus infinite and unmeasured, he is joyous, and tranquil, and self-possessed. But the period arrives when these objects cease to suffice. His mind is at length suddenly awakened and thirsts for intercourse with an intelligence similar to itself. He images to himself the Being whom he loves. Conversant with speculations of the sublimest and most perfect natures, the vision in which he embodies his own imaginations unites all of wonderful, or wise, or beautiful, which the poet, the philosopher, or the lover could depicture. The intellectual faculties, the imagination, the functions of sense, have their respective requisitions on the sympathy of corresponding powers in other human beings. The Poet is represented as uniting these requisitions, and attaching them to a single image. He seeks in

vain for a prototype of his conception. Blasted by his disappointment, he descends to an untimely grave.

The picture is not barren of instruction to actual men. The Poet's self-centred seclusion was avenged by the furies of an irresistible passion pursuing him to speedy ruin. But that Power which strikes the luminaries of the world with sudden darkness and extinction, by awakening them to too exquisite a perception of its influences, dooms to a slow and poisonous decay those meaner spirits that dare to abjure its dominion. Their destiny is more abject and inglorious as their delinquency is more contemptible and pernicious. They who, deluded by no generous error, instigated by no sacred thirst of doubtful knowledge, duped by no illustrious superstition, loving nothing on this earth, and cherishing no hopes beyond, yet keep aloof from sympathies with their kind, rejoicing neither in human joy nor mourning with human grief; these, and such as they, have their apportioned curse. They languish, because none feel with them their common nature. They are morally dead. They are neither friends, nor lovers, nor fathers, nor citizens of the world, nor benefactors of their country. Among those who attempt to exist without human sympathy, the pure and tender-hearted perish through the intensity and passion of their search after its communities, when the vacancy of their spirit suddenly makes itself felt. All else, selfish, blind, and torpid, are those unforeseeing multitudes who constitute, together with their own, the lasting misery and loneliness of the world. Those who love not their fellow-beings live unfruitful lives, and prepare for their old age a miserable grave.

‘The good die first,
And those whose hearts are dry as summer dust,
Burn to the socket!’

December 14, 1815.

Nondum amabam, et amare amabam, quaerebam quid
amarem, amans amare.—*Confess. St. August.*

EARTH, ocean, air, belovèd brotherhood!
If our great Mother has imbued my soul
With aught of natural piety to feel
Your love, and recompense the boon with mine;
If dewy morn, and odorous noon, and even, 5
With sunset and its gorgeous ministers,
And solemn midnight's tingling silentness;
If autumn's hollow sighs in the sere wood,
And winter robing with pure snow and crowns
Of starry ice the grey grass and bare boughs; 10
If spring's voluptuous pantings when she breathes
Her first sweet kisses, have been dear to me;
If no bright bird, insect, or gentle beast
I consciously have injured, but still loved
And cherished these my kindred; then forgive 15
This boast, belovèd brethren, and withdraw
No portion of your wonted favour now!

Mother of this unfathomable world!
Favour my solemn song, for I have loved

Thee ever, and thee only ; I have watched 20
 Thy shadow, and the darkness of thy steps,
 And my heart ever gazes on the depth
 Of thy deep mysteries. I have made my bed
 In charnels and on coffins, where black death
 Keeps record of the trophies won from thee, 25
 Hoping to still these obstinate questionings
 Of thee and thine, by forcing some lone ghost
 Thy messenger, to render up the tale
 Of what we are. In lone and silent hours,
 When night makes a weird sound of its own stillness, 30
 Like an inspired and desperate alchymist
 Staking his very life on some dark hope,
 Have I mixed awful talk and asking looks
 With my most innocent love, until strange tears
 Uniting with those breathless kisses, made 35
 Such magic as compels the charmed night
 To render up thy charge: . . . and, though ne'er yet
 Thou hast unveiled thy inmost sanctuary,
 Enough from incommunicable dream,
 And twilight phantasms, and deep noon-day thought, 40
 Has shone within me, that serenely now
 And moveless, as a long-forgotten lyre
 Suspended in the solitary dome
 Of some mysterious and deserted fane,
 I wait thy breath, Great Parent, that my strain 45
 May modulate with murmurs of the air,
 And motions of the forests and the sea,
 And voice of living beings, and woven hymns
 Of night and day, and the deep heart of man.

There was a Poet whose untimely tomb 50
 No human hands with pious reverence reared,
 But the charmed eddies of autumnal winds
 Built o'er his mouldering bones a pyramid
 Of mouldering leaves in the waste wilderness:—
 A lovely youth,—no mourning maiden decked 55
 With weeping flowers, or votive cypress wreath,
 The lone couch of his everlasting sleep:—
 Gentle, and brave, and generous,—no lorn bard
 Breathed o'er his dark fate one melodious sigh:
 He lived, he died, he sung, in solitude. 60
 Strangers have wept to hear his passionate notes,
 And virgins, as unknown he passed, have pined
 And wasted for fond love of his wild eyes.
 The fire of those soft orbs has ceased to burn,
 And Silence, too enamoured of that voice, 65
 Locks its mute music in her rugged cell.

By solemn vision, and bright silver dream,
 His infancy was nurtured. Every sight

And sound from the vast earth and ambient air,
 Sent to his heart its choicest impulses. 70
 The fountains of divine philosophy
 Fled not his thirsting lips, and all of great,
 Or good, or lovely, which the sacred past
 In truth or fable consecrates, he felt
 And knew. When early youth had passed, he left 75
 His cold fireside and alienated home
 To seek strange truths in undiscovered lands.
 Many a wide waste and tangled wilderness
 Has lured his fearless steps; and he has bought
 With his sweet voice and eyes, from savage men, 80
 His rest and food. Nature's most secret steps
 He like her shadow has pursued, where'er
 The red volcano overcanopies
 Its fields of snow and pinnacles of ice
 With burning smoke, or where bitumen lakes 85
 On black bare pointed islets ever beat
 With sluggish surge, or where the secret caves
 Rugged and dark, winding among the springs
 Of fire and poison, inaccessible
 To avarice or pride, their starry domes 90
 Of diamond and of gold expand above
 Numberless and immeasurable halls,
 Frequent with crystal column, and clear shrines
 Of pearl, and thrones radiant with chrysolite.
 Nor had that scene of ampler majesty 95
 Than gems or gold, the varying roof of heaven
 And the green earth lost in his heart its claims
 To love and wonder; he would linger long
 In lonesome vales, making the wild his home,
 Until the doves and squirrels would partake 100
 From his innocuous hand his bloodless food,
 Lured by the gentle meaning of his looks,
 And the wild antelope, that starts whene'er
 The dry leaf rustles in the brake, suspend
 Her timid steps to gaze upon a form 105
 More graceful than her own.

His wandering step

Obedient to high thoughts, has visited
 The awful ruins of the days of old:
 Athens, and Tyre, and Balbec, and the waste
 Where stood Jerusalem, the fallen towers 110
 Of Babylon, the eternal pyramids,
 Memphis and Thebes, and whatsoe'er of strange
 Sculptured on alabaster obelisk,
 Or jasper tomb, or mutilated sphynx,
 Dark Æthiopia in her desert hills 115
 Conceals. Among the ruined temples there,
 Stupendous columns, and wild images

Of more than man, where marble daemons watch
 The Zodiac's brazen mystery, and dead men
 Hang their mute thoughts on the mute walls around, 120
 He lingered, poring on memorials
 Of the world's youth, through the long burning day
 Gazed on those speechless shapes, nor, when the moon
 Filled the mysterious halls with floating shades
 Suspended he that task, but ever gazed 125
 And gazed, till meaning on his vacant mind
 Flashed like strong inspiration, and he saw
 The thrilling secrets of the birth of time.

Meanwhile an Arab maiden brought his food,
 Her daily portion, from her father's tent, 130
 And spread her matting for his couch, and stole
 From duties and repose to tend his steps:—
 Enamoured, yet not daring for deep awe
 To speak her love:—and watched his nightly sleep,
 Sleepless herself, to gaze upon his lips 135
 Parted in slumber, whence the regular breath
 Of innocent dreams arose: then, when red morn
 Made paler the pale moon, to her cold home
 Wildered, and wan, and panting, she returned.

The Poet wandering on, through Arabie 140
 And Persia, and the wild Carmanian waste,
 And o'er the ærial mountains which pour down
 Indus and Oxus from their icy caves,
 In joy and exultation held his way;
 Till in the vale of Cashmire, far within 145
 Its loneliest dell, where odorous plants entwine
 Beneath the hollow rocks a natural bower,
 Beside a sparkling rivulet he stretched
 His languid limbs. A vision on his sleep
 There came, a dream of hopes that never yet 150
 Had flushed his cheek. He dreamed a veiled maid
 Sate near him, talking in low solemn tones.
 Her voice was like the voice of his own soul
 Heard in the calm of thought; its music long,
 Like woven sounds of streams and breezes, held 155
 His inmost sense suspended in its web
 Of many-coloured woof and shifting hues.
 Knowledge and truth and virtue were her theme,
 And lofty hopes of divine liberty,
 Thoughts the most dear to him, and poesy, 160
 Herself a poet. Soon the solemn mood
 Of her pure mind kindled through all her frame
 A permeating fire: wild numbers then
 She raised, with voice stifled in tremulous sobs
 Subdued by its own pathos: her fair hands 165

Were bare alone, sweeping from some strange harp
 Strange symphony, and in their branching veins
 The eloquent blood told an ineffable tale.
 The beating of her heart was heard to fill
 The pauses of her music, and her breath
 Tumultuously accorded with those fits 170
 Of intermitted song. Sudden she rose,
 As if her heart impatiently endured
 Its bursting burthen: at the sound he turned,
 And saw by the warm light of their own life 175
 Her glowing limbs beneath the sinuous veil
 Of woven wind, her outspread arms now bare,
 Her dark locks floating in the breath of night,
 Her beamy bending eyes, her parted lips
 Outstretched, and pale, and quivering eagerly. 180
 His strong heart sunk and sickened with excess
 Of love. He reared his shuddering limbs and quelled
 His gasping breath, and spread his arms to meet
 Her panting bosom: . . . she drew back a while,
 Then, yielding to the irresistible joy, 185
 With frantic gesture and short breathless cry
 Folded his frame in her dissolving arms.
 Now blackness veiled his dizzy eyes, and night
 Involved and swallowed up the vision; sleep,
 Like a dark flood suspended in its course, 190
 Rolled back its impulse on his vacant brain.

Roused by the shock he started from his trance—
 The cold white light of morning, the blue moon
 Low in the west, the clear and garish hills,
 The distinct valley and the vacant woods, 195
 Spread round him where he stood. Whither have fled
 The hues of heaven that canopied his bower
 Of yesternight? The sounds that soothed his sleep,
 The mystery and the majesty of Earth,
 The joy, the exultation? His wan eyes 200
 Gaze on the empty scene as vacantly
 As ocean's moon looks on the moon in heaven.
 The spirit of sweet human love has sent
 A vision to the sleep of him who spurned
 Her choicest gifts. He eagerly pursues 205
 Beyond the realms of dream that fleeting shade;
 He overleaps the bounds. Alas! Alas!
 Were limbs, and breath, and being intertwined
 Thus treacherously? Lost, lost, for ever lost,
 In the wide pathless desert of dim sleep, 210
 That beautiful shape! Does the dark gate of death
 Conduct to thy mysterious paradise,
 O Sleep? Does the bright arch of rainbow clouds,
 And pendent mountains seen in the calm lake,

Lead only to a black and watery depth,
 While death's blue vault, with loathliest vapours hung, 215
 Where every shade which the foul grave exhales
 Hides its dead eye from the detested day,
 Conducts, O Sleep, to thy delightful realms?
 This doubt with sudden tide flowed on his heart, 220
 The insatiate hope which it awakened, stung
 His brain even like despair.

While daylight held

The sky, the Poet kept mute conference
 With his still soul. At night the passion came,
 Like the fierce fiend of a distempered dream, 225
 And shook him from his rest, and led him forth
 Into the darkness.—As an eagle grasped
 In folds of the green serpent, feels her breast
 Burn with the poison, and precipitates
 Through night and day, tempest, and calm, and cloud, 230
 Frantic with dizzying anguish, her blind flight
 O'er the wide æry wilderness: thus driven
 By the bright shadow of that lovely dream,
 Beneath the cold glare of the desolate night,
 Through tangled swamps and deep precipitous dells, 235
 Startling with careless step the moonlight snake,
 He fled. Red morning dawned upon his flight,
 Shedding the mockery of its vital hues
 Upon his cheek of death. He wandered on
 Till vast Aornos seen from Petra's steep 240
 Hung o'er the low horizon like a cloud;
 Through Balk, and where the desolated tombs
 Of Parthian kings scatter to every wind
 Their wasting dust, wildly he wandered on,
 Day after day a weary waste of hours, 245
 Bearing within his life the brooding care
 That ever fed on its decaying flame.
 And now his limbs were lean; his scattered hair
 Sered by the autumn of strange suffering
 Sung dirges in the wind; his listless hand 250
 Hung like dead bone within its withered skin;
 Life, and the lustre that consumed it, shone
 As in a furnace burning secretly
 From his dark eyes alone. The cottagers,
 Who ministered with human charity 255
 His human wants, beheld with wondering awe
 Their fleeting visitant. The mountaineer,
 Encountering on some dizzy precipice
 That spectral form, deemed that the Spirit of wind
 With lightning eyes, and eager breath, and feet 260
 Disturbing not the drifted snow, had paused
 In its career: the infant would conceal

His troubled visage in his mother's robe
In terror at the glare of those wild eyes,
To remember their strange light in many a dream 265
Of after-times; but youthful maidens, taught
By nature, would interpret half the woe
That wasted him, would call him with false names
Brother, and friend, would press his pallid hand
At parting, and watch, dim through tears, the path 270
Of his departure from their father's door.

At length upon the lone Chorasmian shore
He paused, a wide and melancholy waste
Of putrid marshes. A strong impulse urged
His steps to the sea-shore. A swan was there, 275
Beside a sluggish stream among the reeds.
It rose as he approached, and with strong wings
Scaling the upward sky, bent its bright course
High over the immeasurable main.
His eyes pursued its flight.—'Thou hast a home, 280
Beautiful bird; thou voyagest to thine home,
Where thy sweet mate will twine her downy neck
With thine, and welcome thy return with eyes
Bright in the lustre of their own fond joy.
And what am I that I should linger here, 285
With voice far sweeter than thy dying notes,
Spirit more vast than thine, frame more attuned
To beauty, wasting these surpassing powers
In the deaf air, to the blind earth, and heaven
That echoes not my thoughts?' A gloomy smile 290
Of desperate hope wrinkled his quivering lips.
For sleep, he knew, kept most relentlessly
Its precious charge, and silent death exposed,
Faithless perhaps as sleep, a shadowy lure,
With doubtful smile mocking its own strange charms. 295

Startled by his own thoughts he looked around.
There was no fair fiend near him, not a sight
Or sound of awe but in his own deep mind.
A little shallop floating near the shore
Caught the impatient wandering of his gaze. 300
It had been long abandoned, for its sides
Gaped wide with many a rift, and its frail joints
Swayed with the undulations of the tide.
A restless impulse urged him to embark
And meet lone Death on the drear ocean's waste; 305
For well he knew that mighty Shadow loves
The slimy caverns of the populous deep.

The day was fair and sunny, sea and sky
Drank its inspiring radiance, and the wind
Swept strongly from the shore, blackening the waves. 310

Following his eager soul, the wanderer
 Leaped in the boat, he spread his cloak aloft
 On the bare mast, and took his lonely seat,
 And felt the boat speed o'er the tranquil sea
 Like a torn cloud before the hurricane.

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As one that in a silver vision floats
 Obedient to the sweep of odorous winds
 Upon resplendent clouds, so rapidly
 Along the dark and ruffled waters fled
 The straining boat.—A whirlwind swept it on,
 With fierce gusts and precipitating force,
 Through the white ridges of the chafed sea.
 The waves arose. Higher and higher still
 Their fierce necks writhed beneath the tempest's scourge
 Like serpents struggling in a vulture's grasp.
 Calm and rejoicing in the fearful war
 Of wave ruining on wave, and blast on blast
 Descending, and black flood on whirlpool driven
 With dark obliterating course, he sate:
 As if their genii were the ministers
 Appointed to conduct him to the light
 Of those beloved eyes, the Poet sate
 Holding the steady helm. Evening came on,
 The beams of sunset hung their rainbow hues
 High 'mid the shifting domes of sheeted spray
 That canopied his path o'er the waste deep;
 Twilight, ascending slowly from the east,
 Entwined in duskier wreaths her braided locks
 O'er the fair front and radiant eyes of day;
 Night followed, clad with stars. On every side
 More horribly the multitudinous streams
 Of ocean's mountainous waste to mutual war
 Rushed in dark tumult thundering, as to mock
 The calm and spangled sky. The little boat
 Still fled before the storm; still fled, like foam
 Down the steep cataract of a wintry river;
 Now pausing on the edge of the riven wave;
 Now leaving far behind the bursting mass
 That fell, convulsing ocean: safely fled—
 As if that frail and wasted human form,
 Had been an elemental god.

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At midnight

The moon arose: and lo! the ethereal cliffs
 Of Caucasus, whose icy summits shone
 Among the stars like sunlight, and around
 Whose caverned base the whirlpools and the waves
 Bursting and eddying irresistibly
 Rage and resound for ever.—Who shall save?—
 The boat fled on,—the boiling torrent drove,—

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The crags closed round with black and jagged arms,
 The shattered mountain overhung the sea,
 And faster still, beyond all human speed, 360
 Suspended on the sweep of the smooth wave,
 The little boat was driven. A cavern there
 Yawned, and amid its slant and winding depths
 Ingulfed the rushing sea. The boat fled on 365
 With unrelaxing speed.—‘Vision and Love!’
 The Poet cried aloud, ‘I have beheld
 The path of thy departure. Sleep and death
 Shall not divide us long!’

The boat pursued

The windings of the cavern. Daylight shone 370
 At length upon that gloomy river’s flow;
 Now, where the fiercest war among the waves
 Is calm, on the unfathomable stream
 The boat moved slowly. Where the mountain, riven,
 Exposed those black depths to the azure sky, 375
 Ere yet the flood’s enormous volume fell
 Even to the base of Caucasus, with sound
 That shook the everlasting rocks, the mass
 Filled with one whirlpool all that ample chasm;
 Stair above stair the eddying waters rose, 380
 Circling immeasurably fast, and laved
 With alternating dash the gnarled roots
 Of mighty trees, that stretched their giant arms
 In darkness over it. I’ the midst was left,
 Reflecting, yet distorting every cloud, 385
 A pool of treacherous and tremendous calm.
 Seized by the sway of the ascending stream,
 With dizzy swiftness, round, and round, and round,
 Ridge after ridge the straining boat arose,
 Till on the verge of the extremest curve, 390
 Where, through an opening of the rocky bank,
 The waters overflow, and a smooth spot
 Of glassy quiet mid those battling tides
 Is left, the boat paused shuddering.—Shall it sink
 Down the abyss? Shall the reverting stress 395
 Of that resistless gulf embosom it?
 Now shall it fall?—A wandering stream of wind,
 Breathed from the west, has caught the expanded sail,
 And, lo! with gentle motion, between banks
 Of mossy slope, and on a placid stream, 400
 Beneath a woven grove it sails, and, hark!
 The ghastly torrent mingles its far roar,
 With the breeze murmuring in the musical woods.
 Where the embowering trees recede, and leave
 A little space of green expanse, the cove 405
 Is closed by meeting banks, whose yellow flowers

For ever gaze on their own drooping eyes,
 Reflected in the crystal calm. The wave
 Of the boat's motion marred their pensive task,
 Which nought but vagrant bird, or wanton wind, 410
 Or falling spear-grass, or their own decay
 Had e'er disturbed before. The Poet longed
 To deck with their bright hues his withered hair,
 But on his heart its solitude returned,
 And he forbore. Not the strong impulse hid 415
 In those flushed cheeks, bent eyes, and shadowy frame
 Had yet performed its ministry: it hung
 Upon his life, as lightning in a cloud
 Gleams, hovering ere it vanish, ere the floods
 Of night close over it.

The noonday sun 420
 Now shone upon the forest, one vast mass
 Of mingling shade, whose brown magnificence
 A narrow vale embosoms. There, huge caves,
 Scooped in the dark base of their æry rocks
 Mocking its moans, respond and roar for ever. 425
 The meeting boughs and implicated leaves
 Wove twilight o'er the Poet's path, as led
 By love, or dream, or god, or mightier Death,
 He sought in Nature's dearest haunt, some bank,
 Her cradle, and his sepulchre. More dark 430
 And dark the shades accumulate. The oak,
 Expanding its immense and knotty arms,
 Embraces the light beech. The pyramids
 Of the tall cedar overarching, frame
 Most solemn domes within, and far below, 435
 Like clouds suspended in an emerald sky,
 The ash and the acacia floating hang
 Tremulous and pale. Like restless serpents, clothed
 In rainbow and in fire, the parasites,
 Starred with ten thousand blossoms, flow around 440
 The grey trunks, and, as gamesome infants' eyes,
 With gentle meanings, and most innocent wiles,
 Fold their beams round the hearts of those that love,
 These twine their tendrils with the wedded boughs
 Uniting their close union; the woven leaves 445
 Make net-work of the dark blue light of day,
 And the night's noontide clearness, mutable
 As shapes in the weird clouds. Soft mossy lawns
 Beneath these canopies extend their swells,
 Fragrant with perfumed herbs, and eyed with blooms 450
 Minute yet beautiful. One darkest glen
 Sends from its woods of musk-rose, twined with jasmine,
 A soul-dissolving odour, to invite
 To some more lovely mystery. Through the dell,
 Silence and Twilight here, twin-sisters, keep 455

Their noonday watch, and sail among the shades,
 Like vaporous shapes half seen; beyond, a well,
 Dark, gleaming, and of most translucent wave,
 Images all the woven boughs above,
 And each depending leaf, and every speck 460
 Of azure sky, darting between their chasms;
 Nor aught else in the liquid mirror laves
 Its portraiture, but some inconstant star
 Between one foliated lattice twinkling fair,
 Or, painted bird, sleeping beneath the moon, 465
 Or gorgeous insect floating motionless,
 Unconscious of the day, ere yet his wings
 Have spread their glories to the gaze of noon.

Hither the Poet came. His eyes beheld
 Their own wan light through the reflected lines 470
 Of his thin hair, distinct in the dark depth
 Of that still fountain; as the human heart,
 Gazing in dreams over the gloomy grave,
 Sees its own treacherous likeness there. He heard
 The motion of the leaves, the grass that sprung 475
 Startled and glanced and trembled even to feel
 An unaccustomed presence, and the sound
 Of the sweet brook that from the secret springs
 Of that dark fountain rose. A Spirit seemed
 To stand beside him—clothed in no bright robes 480
 Of shadowy silver or enshrining light.
 Borrowed from aught the visible world affords
 Of grace, or majesty, or mystery;—
 But, undulating woods, and silent well,
 And leaping rivulet, and evening gloom 485
 Now deepening the dark shades, for speech assuming,
 Held commune with him, as if he and it
 Were all that was,—only . . . when his regard
 Was raised by intense pensiveness, . . . two eyes,
 Two starry eyes, hung in the gloom of thought, 490
 And seemed with their serene and azure smiles
 To beckon him.

Obedient to the light
 That shone within his soul, he went, pursuing
 The windings of the dell.—The rivulet
 Wanton and wild, through many a green ravine 495
 Beneath the forest flowed. Sometimes it fell
 Among the moss with hollow harmony
 Dark and profound. Now on the polished stones
 It danced; like childhood laughing as it went:
 Then, through the plain in tranquil wanderings crept, 500
 Reflecting every herb and drooping bud
 That overhung its quietness.—‘O stream!

Whose source is inaccessiblely profound,
 Whither do thy mysterious waters tend?
 Thou imagest my life. Thy darksome stillness, 505
 Thy dazzling waves, thy loud and hollow gulfs,
 Thy searchless fountain, and invisible course
 Have each their type in me: and the wide sky,
 And measureless ocean may declare as soon
 What oozy cavern or what wandering cloud 510
 Contains thy waters, as the universe
 Tell where these living thoughts reside, when stretched
 Upon thy flowers my bloodless limbs shall waste
 I' the passing wind!'

Beside the grassy shore
 Of the small stream he went; he did impress 515
 On the green moss his tremulous step, that caught
 Strong shuddering from his burning limbs. As one
 Roused by some joyous madness from the couch
 Of fever, he did move; yet, not like him,
 Forgetful of the grave, where, when the flame 520
 Of his frail exultation shall be spent,
 He must descend. With rapid steps he went
 Beneath the shade of trees, beside the flow
 Of the wild babbling rivulet; and now
 The forest's solemn canopies were changed 525
 For the uniform and lightsome evening sky.
 Grey rocks did peep from the spare moss, and stemmed
 The struggling brook: tall spires of windlestrae
 Threw their thin shadows down the rugged slope,
 And nought but gnarled roots of ancient pines 530
 Branchless and blasted, clenched with grasping roots
 The unwilling soil. A gradual change was here,
 Yet ghastly. For, as fast years flow away,
 The smooth brow gathers, and the hair grows thin
 And white, and where irradiate dewy eyes 535
 Had shone, gleam stony orbs:—so from his steps
 Bright flowers departed, and the beautiful shade
 Of the green groves, with all their odorous winds
 And musical motions. Calm, he still pursued
 The stream, that with a larger volume now 540
 Rolled through the labyrinthine dell; and there
 Fretted a path through its descending curves
 With its wintry speed. On every side now rose
 Rocks, which, in unimaginable forms,
 Lifted their black and barren pinnacles 545
 In the light of evening, and, its precipice
 Obscuring the ravine, disclosed above,
 Mid toppling stones, black gulfs and yawning caves,
 Whose windings gave ten thousand various tongues

530 roots *ed.* 1816: *query stumps or trunks. See note at end.*

To the loud stream. Lo! where the pass expands
 Its stony jaws, the abrupt mountain breaks,
 And seems, with its accumulated crags,
 To overhang the world: for wide expand
 Beneath the wan stars and descending moon
 Islanded seas, blue mountains, mighty streams,
 Dim tracts and vast, robed in the lustrous gloom,
 Of leaden-coloured even, and fiery hills
 Mingling their flames with twilight, on the verge
 Of the remote horizon. The near scene,
 In naked and severe simplicity,
 Made contrast with the universe. A pine,
 Rock-rooted, stretched athwart the vacancy
 Its swinging boughs, to each inconstant blast
 Yielding one only response, at each pause
 In most familiar cadence, with the howl
 The thunder and the hiss of homeless streams
 Mingling its solemn song, whilst the broad river,
 Foaming and hurrying o'er its rugged path,
 Fell into that immeasurable void
 Scattering its waters to the passing winds.

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Yet the grey precipice and solemn pine
 And torrent, were not all;—one silent nook
 Was there. Even on the edge of that vast mountain,
 Upheld by knotty roots and fallen rocks,
 It overlooked in its serenity
 The dark earth, and the bending vault of stars.
 It was a tranquil spot, that seemed to smile
 Even in the lap of horror. Ivy clasped
 The fissured stones with its entwining arms,
 And did embower with leaves for ever green,
 And berries dark, the smooth and even space
 Of its inviolated floor, and here
 The children of the autumnal whirlwind bore,
 In wanton sport, those bright leaves, whose decay,
 Red, yellow, or ethereally pale,
 Rivals the pride of summer. 'Tis the haunt
 Of every gentle wind, whose breath can teach
 The wilds to love tranquillity. One step,
 One human step alone, has ever broken
 The stillness of its solitude:—one voice
 Alone inspired its echoes;—even that voice
 Which hither came, floating among the winds,
 And led the loveliest among human forms
 To make their wild haunts the depository
 Of all the grace and beauty that endued
 Its motions, render up its majesty,
 Scatter its music on the unfeeling storm,
 And to the damp leaves and blue cavern mould,

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Nurses of rainbow flowers and branching moss,
Commit the colours of that varying cheek,
That snowy breast, those dark and drooping eyes. 600

The dim and hornèd moon hung low, and poured
A sea of lustre on the horizon's verge
That overflowed its mountains. Yellow mist
Filled the unbounded atmosphere, and drank 605
Wan moonlight even to fulness: not a star
Shone, not a sound was heard; the very winds,
Danger's grim playmates, on that precipice
Slept, clasped in his embrace.—O, storm of death!
Whose sightless speed divides this sullen night: 610
And thou, colossal Skeleton, that, still
Guiding its irresistible career
In thy devastating omnipotence,
Art king of this frail world, from the red field
Of slaughter, from the reeking hospital, 615
The patriot's sacred couch, the snowy bed
Of innocence, the scaffold and the throne,
A mighty voice invokes thee. Ruin calls
His brother Death. A rare and regal prey
He hath prepared, prowling around the world;
Glutted with which thou mayst repose, and men 620
Go to their graves like flowers or creeping worms,
Nor ever more offer at thy dark shrine
The unheeded tribute of a broken heart.

When on the threshold of the green recess 625
The wanderer's footsteps fell, he knew that death
Was on him. Yet a little, ere it fled,
Did he resign his high and holy soul
To images of the majestic past,
That paused within his passive being now, 630
Like winds that bear sweet music, when they breathe
Through some dim latticed chamber. He did place
His pale lean hand upon the rugged trunk
Of the old pine. Upon an ivied stone
Reclined his languid head, his limbs did rest, 635
Diffused and motionless, on the smooth brink
Of that obscurest chasm;—and thus he lay,
Surrendering to their final impulses
The hovering powers of life. Hope and despair,
The torturers, slept; no mortal pain or fear 640
Marred his repose, the influxes of sense,
And his own being unalloyed by pain,
Yet feebler and more feeble, calmly fed
The stream of thought, till he lay breathing there
At peace, and faintly smiling:—his last sight 645
Was the great moon, which o'er the western line
Of the wide world her mighty horn suspended,

With whose dun beams inwoven darkness seemed
 To mingle. Now upon the jagged hills
 It rests, and still as the divided frame 650
 Of the vast meteor sunk, the Poet's blood,
 That ever beat in mystic sympathy
 With nature's ebb and flow, grew feebler still:
 And when two lessening points of light alone
 Gleamed through the darkness, the alternate gasp 655
 Of his faint respiration scarce did stir
 The stagnate night:—till the minutest ray
 Was quenched, the pulse yet lingered in his heart.
 It paused—it fluttered. But when heaven remained
 Utterly black, the murky shades involved 660
 An image, silent, cold, and motionless,
 As their own voiceless earth and vacant air.
 Even as a vapour fed with golden beams
 That ministered on sunlight, ere the west
 Eclipses it, was now that wondrous frame— 665
 No sense, no motion, no divinity—
 A fragile lute, on whose harmonious strings
 The breath of heaven did wander—a bright stream
 Once fed with many-voiced waves—a dream
 Of youth, which night and time have quenched for ever, 670
 Still, dark, and dry, and unremembered now.
 O, for Medea's wondrous alchemy,
 Which wheresoe'er it fell made the earth gleam
 With bright flowers, and the wintry boughs exhale
 From vernal blooms fresh fragrance! O, that God, 675
 Profuse of poisons, would concede the chalice
 Which but one living man has drained, who now,
 Vessel of deathless wrath, a slave that feels
 No proud exemption in the blighting curse
 He bears, over the world wanders for ever, 680
 Lone as incarnate death! O, that the dream
 Of dark magician in his visioned cave,
 Raking the cinders of a crucible
 For life and power, even when his feeble hand
 Shakes in its last decay, were the true law 685
 Of this so lovely world! But thou art fled
 Like some frail exhalation; which the dawn
 Robes in its golden beams,—ah! thou hast fled!
 The brave, the gentle, and the beautiful,
 The child of grace and genius. Heartless things 690
 Are done and said i' the world, and many worms
 And beasts and men live on, and mighty Earth
 From sea and mountain, city and wilderness,
 In vesper low or joyous orison,
 Lifts still its solemn voice:—but thou art fled— 695
 Thou canst no longer know or love the shapes
 Of this phantasmal scene, who have to thee

Been purest ministers, who are, alas!
 Now thou art not. Upon those pallid lips
 So sweet even in their silence, on those eyes 700
 That image sleep in death, upon that form
 Yet safe from the worm's outrage, let no tear
 Be shed—not even in thought. Nor, when those hues
 Are gone, and those divinest lineaments,
 Worn by the senseless wind, shall live alone 705
 In the frail pauses of this simple strain,
 Let not high verse, mourning the memory
 Of that which is no more, or painting's woe
 Or sculpture, speak in feeble imagery
 Their own cold powers. Art and eloquence, 710
 And all the shows o' the world are frail and vain
 To weep a loss that turns their lights to shade.
 It is a woe too 'deep for tears,' when all
 Is reft at once, when some surpassing Spirit,
 Whose light adorned the world around it, leaves 715
 Those who remain behind, not sobs or groans,
 The passionate tumult of a clinging hope;
 But pale despair and cold tranquillity,
 Nature's vast frame, the web of human things,
 Birth and the grave, that are not as they were. 720

NOTE ON ALASTOR, BY MRS. SHELLEY

Alastor is written in a very different tone from *Queen Mab*. In the latter, Shelley poured out all the cherished speculations of his youth—all the irrepressible emotions of sympathy, censure, and hope, to which the present suffering, and what he considers the proper destiny, of his fellow-creatures, gave birth. *Alastor*, on the contrary, contains an individual interest only. A very few years, with their attendant events, had checked the ardour of Shelley's hopes, though he still thought them well grounded, and that to advance their fulfilment was the noblest task man could achieve.

This is neither the time nor place to speak of the misfortunes that chequered his life. It will be sufficient to say that, in all he did, he at the time of doing it believed himself justified to his own conscience; while the various ills of poverty and loss of friends brought home to him the sad realities of life. Physical suffering had also considerable influence in causing him to turn his eyes inward; inclining him rather to brood over the thoughts and emotions of his own soul than to glance abroad, and to make, as in *Queen Mab*, the whole universe the object and subject of his song. In the Spring of 1815 an eminent physician pronounced that he was dying rapidly of a consumption; abscesses were formed on his lungs, and he suffered acute spasms. Suddenly a complete change took place; and, though through life he was a martyr to pain and debility, every symptom of pulmonary disease vanished. His nerves, which nature had formed sensitive to an unexampled degree, were rendered still more susceptible by the state of his health.

As soon as the peace of 1814 had opened the Continent, he went abroad. He visited some of the more magnificent scenes of Switzerland, and returned

to England from Lucerne, by the Reuss and the Rhine. The river-navigation enchanted him. In his favourite poem of *Thalaba*, his imagination had been excited by a description of such a voyage. In the summer of 1815, after a tour along the southern coast of Devonshire and a visit to Clifton, he rented a house on Bishopsgate Heath, on the borders of Windsor Forest, where he enjoyed several months of comparative health and tranquil happiness. The later summer months were warm and dry. Accompanied by a few friends, he visited the source of the Thames, making a voyage in a wherry from Windsor to Cricklade. His beautiful stanzas in the churchyard of Lechlade were written on that occasion. *Alastor* was composed on his return. He spent his days under the oak-shades of Windsor Great Park; and the magnificent woodland was a fitting study to inspire the various descriptions of forest-scenery we find in the poem.

None of Shelley's poems is more characteristic than this. The solemn spirit that reigns throughout, the worship of the majesty of nature, the broodings of a poet's heart in solitude—the mingling of the exulting joy which the various aspects of the visible universe inspires with the sad and struggling pangs which human passion imparts—give a touching interest to the whole. The death which he had often contemplated during the last months as certain and near he here represented in such colours as had, in his lonely musings, soothed his soul to peace. The versification sustains the solemn spirit which breathes throughout: it is peculiarly melodious. The poem ought rather to be considered didactic than narrative: it was the outpouring of his own emotions, embodied in the purest form he could conceive, painted in the ideal hues which his brilliant imagination inspired, and softened by the recent anticipation of death.

THE REVOLT OF ISLAM

A POEM IN TWELVE CANTOS

Ὅσας δὲ βροτὸν ἔθνος ἀγλαΐαις ἀπτόμεσθα
περαίνειν πρὸς ἔσχατον
πλόον' ναυσὶ δ' οὔτε πεζὸς ἰὼν ἂν εὖροις
ἐς Ὑπερβορέων ἀγῶνα θαυματὰν ὁδόν.

Πινδ. Πυθ. κ.

[Composed in the neighbourhood of Bisham Wood, near Great Marlow, Bucks, 1817 (April—Sept. 23); printed, with title (dated 1818), *Laon and Cythna; or, The Revolution of the Golden City: A Vision of the Nineteenth Century*, Oct., Nov., 1817, but suppressed, pending revision, by the publishers, C. & J. Ollier. (A few copies had got out, but these were recalled, and some recovered.) Published, with a fresh title-page and twenty-seven cancel-leaves, as *The Revolt of Islam*, Jan. 10, 1818. Sources of the text are (1) *Laon and Cythna*, 1818; (2) *The Revolt of Islam*, 1818; (3) *Poetical Works*, 1839, edd. 1st and 2nd—both edited by Mrs. Shelley. A copy, with several pages missing, of the *Preface*, the *Dedication*, and *Canto I* of *Laon and Cythna* is amongst the Shelley MSS. at the Bodleian. For a full collation of this MS. see Mr. C. D. Locock's *Examination of the Shelley MSS. at the Bodleian Library*. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903. Two MS. fragments from the Hunt papers are also extant: one (twenty-four lines) in the possession of Mr. W. M. Rossetti, another (IX. xxiii. 9—xxix. 6) in that of Mr. H. Buxton Forman, C.B. See *The Shelley Library*, pp. 83–86, for an account of the copy of *Laon* upon which Shelley worked in revising for publication.]

PREFACE

THE Poem which I now present to the world is an attempt from which I scarcely dare to expect success, and in which a writer of established fame might fail without disgrace. It is an experiment on the temper of the public mind, as to how far a thirst for a happier condition of moral and political society survives, among the enlightened and refined, the tempests which have shaken the age in which we live. I have sought to enlist the harmony of metrical language, the ethereal combinations of the fancy, the rapid and subtle transitions of human passion, all those elements which essentially compose a Poem, in the cause of a liberal and comprehensive morality; and in the view of kindling within the bosoms of my readers a virtuous enthusiasm for those doctrines of liberty and justice, that faith and hope in something good, which neither violence nor misrepresentation nor prejudice can ever totally extinguish among mankind.

For this purpose I have chosen a story of human passion in its most universal character, diversified with moving and romantic adventures, and appealing, in contempt of all artificial opinions or institutions, to the common sympathies of every human breast. I have made no attempt to recommend the motives which I would substitute for those at present governing mankind, by methodical and systematic argument. I would only awaken the feelings, so that the reader should see the beauty of true virtue, and be incited to those inquiries which have led to my moral and political creed, and that of some of the sublimest intellects in the world. The Poem therefore (with the exception of the first canto, which is purely introductory) is narrative, not didactic. It is a succession of pictures illustrating the growth and progress of individual mind aspiring after excellence, and devoted to the love of mankind; its influence in refining and making pure the most daring and uncommon impulses of the imagination, the understanding, and the senses; its impatience at 'all the oppressions which are done under the sun'; its tendency to awaken public hope, and to enlighten and improve mankind; the rapid effects of the application of that tendency; the awakening of an immense nation from their slavery and degradation to a true sense of moral dignity and freedom; the bloodless dethronement of their oppressors, and the unveiling of the religious frauds by which they had been deluded into submission; the tranquillity of successful patriotism, and the universal toleration and benevolence of true philanthropy; the treachery and barbarity of hired soldiers; vice not the object of punishment and hatred, but kindness and pity; the faithlessness of tyrants; the confederacy of the Rulers of the World, and the restoration of the expelled Dynasty by foreign arms; the massacre and extermination of the Patriots, and the victory of established power; the consequences of legitimate despotism, —civil war, famine, plague, superstition, and an utter extinction of the domestic affections; the judicial murder of the advocates of Liberty; the temporary triumph of oppression, that secure earnest of its final and inevitable fall; the transient nature of ignorance and error, and the eternity of genius and virtue. Such is the series of delineations of which the Poem consists. And, if the lofty passions with which it has been my scope to distinguish this story shall not excite in the reader a generous impulse, an ardent thirst for excellence, an interest profound and strong such as belongs to no meaner

desires, let not the failure be imputed to a natural unfitness for human sympathy in these sublime and animating themes. It is the business of the Poet to communicate to others the pleasure and the enthusiasm arising out of those images and feelings in the vivid presence of which within his own mind consists at once his inspiration and his reward.

The panic which, like an epidemic transport, seized upon all classes of men during the excesses consequent upon the French Revolution, is gradually giving place to sanity. It has ceased to be believed that whole generations of mankind ought to consign themselves to a hopeless inheritance of ignorance and misery, because a nation of men who had been dupes and slaves for centuries were incapable of conducting themselves with the wisdom and tranquillity of freemen so soon as some of their fetters were partially loosened. That their conduct could not have been marked by any other characters than ferocity and thoughtlessness is the historical fact from which liberty derives all its recommendations, and falsehood the worst features of its deformity. There is a reflux in the tide of human things which bears the shipwrecked hopes of men into a secure haven after the storms are past. Methinks, those who now live have survived an age of despair.

The French Revolution may be considered as one of those manifestations of a general state of feeling among civilised mankind produced by a defect of correspondence between the knowledge existing in society and the improvement or gradual abolition of political institutions. The year 1788 may be assumed as the epoch of one of the most important crises produced by this feeling. The sympathies connected with that event extended to every bosom. The most generous and amiable natures were those which participated the most extensively in these sympathies. But such a degree of unmingled good was expected as it was impossible to realise. If the Revolution had been in every respect prosperous, then misrule and superstition would lose half their claims to our abhorrence, as fetters which the captive can unlock with the slightest motion of his fingers, and which do not eat with poisonous rust into the soul. The revulsion occasioned by the atrocities of the demagogues, and the re-establishment of successive tyrannies in France, was terrible, and felt in the remotest corner of the civilised world. Could they listen to the plea of reason who had groaned under the calamities of a social state according to the provisions of which one man riots in luxury whilst another famishes for want of bread? Can he who the day before was a trampled slave suddenly become liberal-minded, forbearing, and independent? This is the consequence of the habits of a state of society to be produced by resolute perseverance and indefatigable hope, and long-suffering and long-believing courage, and the systematic efforts of generations of men of intellect and virtue. Such is the lesson which experience teaches now. But, on the first reverses of hope in the progress of French liberty, the sanguine eagerness for good overleaped the solution of these questions, and for a time extinguished itself in the unexpectedness of their result. Thus, many of the most ardent and tender-hearted of the worshippers of public good have been morally ruined by what a partial glimpse of the events they deplored appeared to show as the melancholy desolation of all their cherished hopes. Hence gloom and misanthropy have become the characteristics of the age in which we live, the solace of a disappointment that unconsciously finds relief only in the wilful exaggeration of its own despair. This influence has tainted the literature of the age with the hopelessness of the

minds from which it flows. Metaphysics,¹ and inquiries into moral and political science, have become little else than vain attempts to revive exploded superstitions, or sophisms like those² of Mr. Malthus, calculated to lull the oppressors of mankind into a security of everlasting triumph. Our works of fiction and poetry have been overshadowed by the same infectious gloom. But mankind appear to me to be emerging from their trance. I am aware, methinks, of a slow, gradual, silent change. In that belief I have composed the following Poem.

I do not presume to enter into competition with our greatest contemporary Poets. Yet I am unwilling to tread in the footsteps of any who have preceded me. I have sought to avoid the imitation of any style of language or versification peculiar to the original minds of which it is the character; designing that, even if what I have produced be worthless, it should still be properly my own. Nor have I permitted any system relating to mere words to divert the attention of the reader, from whatever interest I may have succeeded in creating, to my own ingenuity in contriving to disgust them according to the rules of criticism. I have simply clothed my thoughts in what appeared to me the most obvious and appropriate language. A person familiar with nature, and with the most celebrated productions of the human mind, can scarcely err in following the instinct, with respect to selection of language, produced by that familiarity.

There is an education peculiarly fitted for a Poet, without which genius and sensibility can hardly fill the circle of their capacities. No education, indeed, can entitle to this appellation a dull and unobservant mind, or one, though neither dull nor unobservant, in which the channels of communication between thought and expression have been obstructed or closed. How far it is my fortune to belong to either of the latter classes I cannot know. I aspire to be something better. The circumstances of my accidental education have been favourable to this ambition. I have been familiar from boyhood with mountains and lakes and the sea, and the solitude of forests: Danger, which sports upon the brink of precipices, has been my playmate. I have trodden the glaciers of the Alps, and lived under the eye of Mont Blanc. I have been a wanderer among distant fields. I have sailed down mighty rivers, and seen the sun rise and set, and the stars come forth, whilst I have sailed night and day down a rapid stream among mountains. I have seen populous cities, and have watched the passions which rise and spread, and sink and change, amongst assembled multitudes of men. I have seen the theatre of the more visible ravages of tyranny and war; cities and villages reduced to scattered groups of black and roofless houses, and the naked inhabitants sitting famished upon their desolated thresholds. I have conversed with living men of genius. The poetry of ancient Greece and Rome, and modern Italy, and our own country, has been to me, like external nature, a passion and an enjoyment. Such are the sources from which the materials for the imagery of my Poem have been drawn. I have considered Poetry in its most compre-

¹ I ought to except Sir W. Drummond's *Academical Questions*; a volume of very acute and powerful metaphysical criticism.

² It is remarkable, as a symptom of the revival of public hope, that Mr. Malthus has assigned, in the later editions of his work, an indefinite dominion to moral restraint over the principle of population. This concession answers all the inferences from his doctrine unfavourable to human improvement, and reduces the *Essay on Population* to a commentary illustrative of the unanswerableness of *Political Justice*.

hensive sense; and have read the Poets and the Historians and the Metaphysicians¹ whose writings have been accessible to me, and have looked upon the beautiful and majestic scenery of the earth, as common sources of those elements which it is the province of the Poet to embody and combine. Yet the experience and the feelings to which I refer do not in themselves constitute men Poets, but only prepares them to be the auditors of those who are. How far I shall be found to possess that more essential attribute of Poetry, the power of awakening in others sensations like those which animate my own bosom, is that which, to speak sincerely, I know not; and which, with an acquiescent and contented spirit, I expect to be taught by the effect which I shall produce upon those whom I now address.

I have avoided, as I have said before, the imitation of any contemporary style. But there must be a resemblance, which does not depend upon their own will, between all the writers of any particular age. They cannot escape from subjection to a common influence which arises out of an infinite combination of circumstances belonging to the times in which they live; though each is in a degree the author of the very influence by which his being is thus pervaded. Thus, the tragic poets of the age of Pericles; the Italian revivers of ancient learning; those mighty intellects of our own country that succeeded the Reformation, the translators of the Bible, Shakespeare, Spenser, the dramatists of the reign of Elizabeth, and Lord Bacon²; the colder spirits of the interval that succeeded;—all resemble each other, and differ from every other in their several classes. In this view of things, Ford can no more be called the imitator of Shakespeare than Shakespeare the imitator of Ford. There were perhaps few other points of resemblance between these two men than that which the universal and inevitable influence of their age produced. And this is an influence which neither the meanest scribbler nor the sublimest genius of any era can escape; and which I have not attempted to escape.

I have adopted the stanza of Spenser (a measure inexpressibly beautiful), not because I consider it a finer model of poetical harmony than the blank verse of Shakespeare and Milton, but because in the latter there is no shelter for mediocrity; you must either succeed or fail. This perhaps an aspiring spirit should desire. But I was enticed also by the brilliancy and magnificence of sound which a mind that has been nourished upon musical thoughts can produce by a just and harmonious arrangement of the pauses of this measure. Yet there will be found some instances where I have completely failed in this attempt; and one, which I here request the reader to consider as an erratum, where there is left, most inadvertently, an alexandrine in the middle of a stanza.

But in this as in every other respect I have written fearlessly. It is the misfortune of this age that its Writers, too thoughtless of immortality, are exquisitely sensible to temporary praise or blame. They write with the fear of Reviews before their eyes. This system of criticism sprang up in that torpid interval when Poetry was not. Poetry, and the art which professes to regulate and limit its powers, cannot subsist together. Longinus could

¹ In this sense there may be such a thing as perfectibility in works of fiction, notwithstanding the concession often made by the advocates of human improvement, that perfectibility is a term applicable only to science.

² Milton stands alone in the age which he illumined.

not have been the contemporary of Homer, nor Boileau of Horace. Yet this species of criticism never presumed to assert an understanding of its own: it has always, unlike true science, followed, not preceded, the opinion of mankind, and would even now bribe with worthless adulation some of our greatest Poets to impose gratuitous fetters on their own imaginations, and become unconscious accomplices in the daily murder of all genius either not so aspiring or not so fortunate as their own. I have sought therefore to write, as I believe that Homer, Shakespeare, and Milton, wrote, with an utter disregard of anonymous censure. I am certain that calumny and misrepresentation, though it may move me to compassion, cannot disturb my peace. I shall understand the expressive silence of those sagacious enemies who dare not trust themselves to speak. I shall endeavour to extract, from the midst of insult and contempt and maledictions, those admonitions which may tend to correct whatever imperfections such censurers may discover in this my first serious appeal to the Public. If certain Critics were as clear-sighted as they are malignant, how great would be the benefit to be derived from their virulent writings! As it is, I fear I shall be malicious enough to be amused with their paltry tricks and lame invectives. Should the Public judge that my composition is worthless, I shall indeed bow before the tribunal from which Milton received his crown of immortality; and shall seek to gather, if I live, strength from that defeat, which may nerve me to some new enterprise of thought which may *not* be worthless. I cannot conceive that Lucretius, when he meditated that poem whose doctrines are yet the basis of our metaphysical knowledge, and whose eloquence has been the wonder of mankind, wrote in awe of such censure as the hired sophists of the impure and superstitious noblemen of Rome might affix to what he should produce. It was at the period when Greece was led captive, and Asia made tributary to the Republic, fast verging itself to slavery and ruin, that a multitude of Syrian captives, bigoted to the worship of their obscene Ashtaroth, and the unworthy successors of Socrates and Zeno, found there a precarious subsistence by administering, under the name of freedmen, to the vices and vanities of the great. These wretched men were skilled to plead, with a superficial but plausible set of sophisms, in favour of that contempt for virtue which is the portion of slaves, and that faith in portents, the most fatal substitute for benevolence in the imaginations of men, which, arising from the enslaved communities of the East, then first began to overwhelm the western nations in its stream. Were these the kind of men whose disapprobation the wise and lofty-minded Lucretius should have regarded with a salutary awe? The latest and perhaps the meanest of those who follow in his footsteps would disdain to hold life on such conditions.

The Poem now presented to the Public occupied little more than six months in the composition. That period has been devoted to the task with unremitting ardour and enthusiasm. I have exercised a watchful and earnest criticism on my work as it grew under my hands. I would willingly have sent it forth to the world with that perfection which long labour and revision is said to bestow. But I found that, if I should gain something in exactness by this method, I might lose much of the newness and energy of imagery and language as it flowed fresh from my mind. And, although the mere composition occupied no more than six months, the thoughts thus arranged were slowly gathered in as many years.

I trust that the reader will carefully distinguish between those opinions which have a dramatic propriety in reference to the characters which they are designed to elucidate, and such as are properly my own. The erroneous and degrading idea which men have conceived of a Supreme Being, for instance, is spoken against, but not the Supreme Being itself. The belief which some superstitious persons whom I have brought upon the stage entertain of the Deity, as injurious to the character of his benevolence, is widely different from my own. In recommending also a great and important change in the spirit which animates the social institutions of mankind, I have avoided all flattery to those violent and malignant passions of our nature which are ever on the watch to mingle with and to alloy the most beneficial innovations. There is no quarter given to Revenge, or Envy, or Prejudice. Love is celebrated everywhere as the sole law which should govern the moral world.

DEDICATION

There is no danger to a man, that knows
 What life and death is: there's not any law
 Exceeds his knowledge; neither is it lawful
 That he should stoop to any other law.—CHAPMAN.

TO MARY ———

I

So now my summer task is ended, Mary,
 And I return to thee, mine own heart's home;
 As to his Queen some victor Knight of Faëry,
 Earning bright spoils for her enchanted dome;
 Nor thou disdain, that ere my fame become
 A star among the stars of mortal night,
 If it indeed may cleave its natal gloom,
 Its doubtful promise thus I would unite
 With thy beloved name, thou Child of love and light.

5

II

The toil which stole from thee so many an hour,
 Is ended,—and the fruit is at thy feet!
 No longer where the woods to frame a bower
 With interlacèd branches mix and meet,
 Or where with sound like many voices sweet,
 Waterfalls leap among wild islands green,
 Which framed for my lone boat a lone retreat
 Of moss-grown trees and weeds, shall I be seen:
 But beside thee, where still my heart has ever been.

10

15

III

Thoughts of great deeds were mine, dear Friend, when first
 The clouds which wrap this world from youth did pass.
 I do remember well the hour which burst
 My spirit's sleep: a fresh May-dawn it was,
 When I walked forth upon the glittering grass,

20

And wept, I knew not why; until there rose
 From the near schoolroom, voices, that, alas! 25
 Were but one echo from a world of woes—
 The harsh and grating strife of tyrants and of foes.

IV

And then I clasped my hands and looked around—
 —But none was near to mock my streaming eyes,
 Which poured their warm drops on the sunny ground— 30
 So, without shame, I spake:—‘I will be wise,
 And just, and free, and mild, if in me lies
 Such power, for I grow weary to behold
 The selfish and the strong still tyrannise
 Without reproach or check.’ I then controlled 35
 My tears, my heart grew calm, and I was meek and bold.

V

And from that hour did I with earnest thought
 Heap knowledge from forbidden mines of lore,
 Yet nothing that my tyrants knew or taught
 I cared to learn, but from that secret store 40
 Wrought linkèd armour for my soul, before
 It might walk forth to war among mankind;
 Thus power and hope were strengthened more and more
 Within me, till there came upon my mind
 A sense of loneliness, a thirst with which I pined. 45

VI

Alas, that love should be a blight and snare
 To those who seek all sympathies in one!—
 Such once I sought in vain; then black despair,
 The shadow of a starless night, was thrown
 Over the world in which I moved alone:— 50
 Yet never found I one not false to me,
 Hard hearts, and cold, like weights of icy stone
 Which crushed and withered mine, that could not be
 Aught but a lifeless clod, until revived by thee.

VII

Thou Friend, whose presence on my wintry heart
 Fell, like bright Spring upon some herbless plain;
 How beautiful and calm and free thou wert
 In thy young wisdom, when the mortal chain
 Of Custom thou didst burst and rend in twain,
 And walked as free as light the clouds among, 60
 Which many an envious slave then breathed in vain
 From his dim dungeon, and my spirit sprung
 To meet thee from the woes which had begirt it long!

VIII

No more alone through the world's wilderness,
 Although I trod the paths of high intent, 65
 I journeyed now: no more companionless,
 Where solitude is like despair, I went.—
 There is the wisdom of a stern content
 When Poverty can blight the just and good,
 When Infamy dares mock the innocent, 70
 And cherished friends turn with the multitude
 To trample: this was ours, and we unshaken stood!

IX

Now has descended a serener hour,
 And with inconstant fortune, friends return;
 Though suffering leaves the knowledge and the power 75
 Which says:—Let scorn be not repaid with scorn.
 And from thy side two gentle babes are born
 To fill our home with smiles, and thus are we
 Most fortunate beneath life's beaming morn;
 And these delights, and thou, have been to me 80
 The parents of the Song I consecrate to thee.

X

Is it, that now my inexperienced fingers
 But strike the prelude of a loftier strain?
 Or, must the lyre on which my spirit lingers
 Soon pause in silence, ne'er to sound again, 85
 Though it might shake the Anarch Custom's reign,
 And charm the minds of men to Truth's own sway
 Holier than was Amphion's? I would fain
 Reply in hope—but I am worn away,
 And Death and Love are yet contending for their prey. 90

XI

And what art thou? I know, but dare not speak:
 Time may interpret to his silent years.
 Yet in the paleness of thy thoughtful cheek,
 And in the light thine ample forehead wears,
 And in thy sweetest smiles, and in thy tears, 95
 And in thy gentle speech, a prophecy
 Is whispered, to subdue my fondest fears:
 And through thine eyes, even in thy soul I see
 A lamp of vestal fire burning internally.

XII

They say that thou wert lovely from thy birth, 100
 Of glorious parents, thou aspiring Child.
 I wonder not—for One then left this earth
 Whose life was like a setting planet mild,
 Which clothed thee in the radiance undefiled

Of its departing glory ; still her fame
 Shines on thee, through the tempests dark and wild
 Which shake these latter days ; and thou canst claim
 The shelter, from thy Sire, of an immortal name.

105

XIII

One voice came forth from many a mighty spirit,
 Which was the echo of three thousand years ;
 And the tumultuous world stood mute to hear it,
 As some lone man who in a desert hears
 The music of his home :—unwonted fears
 Fell on the pale oppressors of our race,
 And Faith, and Custom, and low-thoughted cares,
 Like thunder-stricken dragons, for a space
 Left the torn human heart, their food and dwelling-place.

110

115

XIV

Truth's deathless voice pauses among mankind !
 If there must be no response to my cry—
 If men must rise and stamp with fury blind
 On his pure name who loves them,—thou and I,
 Sweet friend ! can look from our tranquillity
 Like lamps into the world's tempestuous night,—
 Two tranquil stars, while clouds are passing by
 Which wrap them from the foundering seaman's sight,
 That burn from year to year with unextinguished light.

120

125

CANTO I

I

WHEN the last hope of trampled France had failed
 Like a brief dream of unremaining glory,
 From visions of despair I rose, and scaled
 The peak of an æreal promontory,
 Whose caverned base with the vexed surge was hoary ;
 And saw the golden dawn break forth, and waken
 Each cloud, and every wave :—but transitory
 The calm : for sudden, the firm earth was shaken,
 As if by the last wreck its frame were overtaken.

130

135

II

So as I stood, one blast of muttering thunder
 Burst in far peals along the waveless deep,
 When, gathering fast, around, above, and under,
 Long trains of tremulous mist began to creep,
 Until their complicating lines did steep
 The orient sun in shadow :—not a sound
 Was heard ; one horrible repose did keep
 The forests and the floods, and all around
 Darkness more dread than night was poured upon the ground.

140

III

Hark! 'tis the rushing of a wind that sweeps
 Earth and the ocean. See! the lightnings yawn
 Deluging Heaven with fire, and the lashed deeps
 Glitter and boil beneath: it rages on,
 One mighty stream, whirlwind and waves upthrown,
 Lightning, and hail, and darkness eddying by.
 There is a pause—the sea-birds, that were gone
 Into their caves to shriek, come forth, to spy
 What calm has fall'n on earth, what light is in the sky.

IV

For, where the irresistible storm had cloven
 That fearful darkness, the blue sky was seen
 Fretted with many a fair cloud interwoven
 Most delicately, and the ocean green,
 Beneath that opening spot of blue serene,
 Quivered like burning emerald: calm was spread
 On all below; but far on high, between
 Earth and the upper air, the vast clouds fled,
 Countless and swift as leaves on autumn's tempest shed.

V

For ever, as the war became more fierce
 Between the whirlwinds and the rack on high,
 That spot grew more serene; blue light did pierce
 The woof of those white clouds, which seem to lie
 Far, deep, and motionless; while through the sky
 The pallid semicircle of the moon
 Passed on, in slow and moving majesty;
 Its upper horn arrayed in mists, which soon
 But slowly fled, like dew beneath the beams of noon.

VI

I could not choose but gaze; a fascination
 Dwelt in that moon, and sky, and clouds, which drew
 My fancy thither, and in expectation
 Of what I knew not, I remained:—the hue
 Of the white moon, amid that heaven so blue,
 Suddenly stained with shadow did appear;
 A speck, a cloud, a shape, approaching grew,
 Like a great ship in the sun's sinking sphere
 Beheld afar at sea, and swift it came anear.

VII

Even like a bark, which from a chasm of mountains,
 Dark, vast, and overhanging, on a river
 Which there collects the strength of all its fountains,
 Comes forth, whilst with the speed its frame doth quiver,
 Sails, oars, and stream, tending to one endeavour;

So, from that chasm of light a wingèd Form
 On all the winds of heaven approaching ever
 Floated, dilating as it came: the storm
 Pursued it with fierce blasts, and lightnings swift and warm.

VIII

A course precipitous, of dizzy speed, 190
 Suspending thought and breath; a monstrous sight!
 For in the air do I behold indeed
 An Eagle and a Serpent wreathed in fight:—
 And now relaxing its impetuous flight,
 Before the æreal rock on which I stood, 195
 The Eagle, hovering, wheeled to left and right,
 And hung with lingering wings over the flood,
 And startled with its yells the wide air's solitude.

IX

A shaft of light upon its wings descended,
 And every golden feather gleamed therein— 200
 Feather and scale, inextricably blended.
 The Serpent's mailed and many-coloured skin
 Shone through the plumes its coils were twined within
 By many a swoln and knotted fold, and high
 And far, the neck, receding lithe and thin, 205
 Sustained a crested head, which warily
 Shifted and glanced before the Eagle's steadfast eye.

X

Around, around, in ceaseless circles wheeling
 With clang of wings and scream, the Eagle sailed
 Incessantly—sometimes on high concealing 210
 Its lessening orbs, sometimes as if it failed,
 Drooped through the air; and still it shrieked and wailed,
 And casting back its eager head, with beak
 And talon unremittingly assailed
 The wreathèd Serpent, who did ever seek 215
 Upon his enemy's heart a mortal wound to wreak.

XI

What life, what power, was kindled and arose
 Within the sphere of that appalling fray!
 For, from the encounter of those wondrous foes,
 A vapour like the sea's suspended spray 220
 Hung gathered: in the void air, far away,
 Floated the shattered plumes; bright scales did leap,
 Where'er the Eagle's talons made their way,
 Like sparks into the darkness;—as they sweep,
 Blood stains the snowy foam of the tumultuous deep. 225

XII

Swift chances in that combat—many a check,
 And many a change, a dark and wild turmoil;
 Sometimes the Snake around his enemy's neck
 Locked in stiff rings his adamant coil,
 Until the Eagle, faint with pain and toil, 230
 Remitted his strong flight, and near the sea
 Languidly fluttered, hopeless so to foil
 His adversary, who then reared on high
 His red and burning crest, radiant with victory.

XIII

Then on the white edge of the bursting surge, 235
 Where they had sunk together, would the Snake
 Relax his suffocating grasp, and scourge
 The wind with his wild writhings; for to break
 That chain of torment, the vast bird would shake
 The strength of his unconquerable wings 240
 As in despair, and with his sinewy neck,
 Dissolve in sudden shock those linked rings,
 Then soar—as swift as smoke from a volcano springs.

XIV

Wile baffled wile, and strength encountered strength,
 Thus long, but unprevailing:—the event 245
 Of that portentous fight appeared at length:
 Until the lamp of day was almost spent
 It had endured, when lifeless, stark, and rent,
 Hung high that mighty Serpent, and at last
 Fell to the sea, while o'er the continent, 250
 With clang of wings and scream the Eagle passed,
 Heavily borne away on the exhausted blast.

XV

And with it fled the tempest, so that ocean
 And earth and sky shone through the atmosphere—
 Only, 'twas strange to see the red commotion 255
 Of waves like mountains o'er the sinking sphere
 Of sunset sweep, and their fierce roar to hear
 Amid the calm: down the steep path I wound
 To the sea-shore—the evening was most clear
 And beautiful, and there the sea I found 260
 Calm as a cradled child in dreamless slumber bound.

XVI

There was a Woman, beautiful as morning,
 Sitting beneath the rocks, upon the sand
 Of the waste sea—fair as one flower adorning
 An icy wilderness—each delicate hand 265
 Lay crossed upon her bosom, and the band

Of her dark hair had fall'n, and so she sate
 Looking upon the waves; on the bare strand
 Upon the sea-mark a small boat did wait,
 Fair as herself, like Love by Hope left desolate.

270

XVII

It seemed that this fair Shape had looked upon
 That unimaginable fight, and now
 That her sweet eyes were weary of the sun,
 As brightly it illustrated her woe;
 For in the tears which silently to flow
 Paused not, its lustre hung: she watching aye
 The foam-wreaths which the faint tide wove below
 Upon the spangled sands, groaned heavily,
 And after every groan looked up over the sea.

275

XVIII

And when she saw the wounded Serpent make
 His path between the waves, her lips grew pale,
 Parted, and quivered; the tears ceased to break
 From her immovable eyes; no voice of wail
 Escaped her; but she rose, and on the gale
 Loosening her star-bright robe and shadowy hair
 Poured forth her voice; the caverns of the vale
 That opened to the ocean, caught it there,
 And filled with silver sounds the overflowing air.

280

285

XIX

She spake in language whose strange melody
 Might not belong to earth. I heard, alone,
 What made its music more melodious be,
 The pity and the love of every tone;
 But to the Snake those accents sweet were known
 His native tongue and hers; nor did he beat
 The hoar spray idly then, but winding on
 Through the green shadows of the waves that meet
 Near to the shore, did pause beside her snowy feet.

290

295

XX

Then on the sands the Woman sate again,
 And wept and clasped her hands, and all between,
 Renewed the unintelligible strain
 Of her melodious voice and eloquent mien;
 And she unveiled her bosom, and the green
 And glancing shadows of the sea did play
 O'er its marmoreal depth:—one moment seen,
 For ere the next, the Serpent did obey
 Her voice, and, coiled in rest in her embrace it lay.

300

305

XXI

Then she arose, and smiled on me with eyes
 Serene yet sorrowing, like that planet fair,
 While yet the daylight lingereth in the skies
 Which cleaves with arrowy beams the dark-red air, 310
 And said: 'To grieve is wise, but the despair
 Was weak and vain which led thee here from sleep:
 This shalt thou know, and more, if thou dost dare
 With me and with this Serpent, o'er the deep,
 A voyage divine and strange, companionship to keep.' 315

XXII

Her voice was like the wildest, saddest tone,
 Yet sweet, of some loved voice heard long ago.
 I wept. 'Shall this fair woman all alone,
 Over the sea with that fierce Serpent go?
 His head is on her heart, and who can know 320
 How soon he may devour his feeble prey?'—
 Such were my thoughts, when the tide gan to flow;
 And that strange boat like the moon's shade did sway
 Amid reflected stars that in the waters lay:—

XXIII

A boat of rare device, which had no sail 325
 But its own curvèd prow of thin moonstone,
 Wrought like a web of texture fine and frail,
 To catch those gentlest winds which are not known
 To breathe, but by the steady speed alone
 With which it cleaves the sparkling sea; and now 330
 We are embarked—the mountains hang and frown
 Over the starry deep that gleams below,
 A vast and dim expanse, as o'er the waves we go.

XXIV

And as we sailed, a strange and awful tale
 That Woman told, like such mysterious dream 335
 As makes the slumberer's cheek with wonder pale!
 'Twas midnight, and around, a shoreless stream,
 Wide ocean rolled, when that majestic theme
 Shrined in her heart found utterance, and she bent
 Her looks on mine; those eyes a kindling beam 340
 Of love divine into my spirit sent,
 And ere her lips could move, made the air eloquent.

XXV

'Speak not to me, but hear! Much shalt thou learn,
 Much must remain unthought, and more untold,
 In the dark Future's ever-flowing urn: 345
 Know then, that from the depth of ages old,
 Two Powers o'er mortal things dominion hold

Ruling the world with a divided lot,
 Immortal, all-pervading, manifold,
 Twin Genii, equal Gods—when life and thought
 Sprang forth, they burst the womb of inessential Nought. 359

XXVI

'The earliest dweller of the world, alone,
 Stood on the verge of chaos. Lo! afar
 O'er the wide wild abyss two meteors shone,
 Sprung from the depth of its tempestuous jar: 355
 A blood-red Comet and the Morning Star
 Mingling their beams in combat—as he stood,
 All thoughts within his mind waged mutual war,
 In dreadful sympathy—when to the flood
 That fair Star fell, he turned and shed his brother's blood. 360

XXVII

'Thus evil triumphed, and the Spirit of evil,
 One Power of many shapes which none may know,
 One Shape of many names; the Fiend did revel
 In victory, reigning o'er a world of woe,
 For the new race of man went to and fro, 365
 Famished and homeless, loathed and loathing, wild,
 And hating good—for his immortal foe,
 He changed from starry shape, beauteous and mild,
 To a dire Snake, with man and beast unreconciled.

XXVIII

'The darkness lingering o'er the dawn of things, 370
 Was Evil's breath and life; this made him strong
 To soar aloft with overshadowing wings;
 And the great Spirit of Good did creep among
 The nations of mankind, and every tongue
 Cursed and blasphemed him as he passed; for none 375
 Knew good from evil, though their names were hung
 In mockery o'er the fane where many a groan,
 As King, and Lord, and God, the conquering Fiend did own,—

XXIX

'The Fiend, whose name was Legion; Death, Decay,
 Earthquake and Blight, and Want, and Madness pale, 380
 Wingèd and wan diseases, an array
 Numerous as leaves that strew the autumnal gale;
 Poison, a snake in flowers, beneath the veil
 Of food and mirth hiding his mortal head;
 And, without whom all these might nought avail, 385
 Fear, Hatred, Faith, and Tyranny, who spread
 Those subtle nets which snare the living and the dead.

XXX

'His spirit is their power, and they his slaves
 In air, and light, and thought, and language, dwell;
 And keep their state from palaces to graves,
 In all resorts of men—invisible, 390
 But when, in ebon mirror, Nightmare fell
 To tyrant or impostor bids them rise,
 Black-wingèd demon forms—whom, from the hell,
 His reign and dwelling beneath nether skies, 395
 He loosens to their dark and blasting ministries.

XXXI

'In the world's youth his empire was as firm
 As its foundations . . . Soon the Spirit of Good,
 Though in the likeness of a loathsome worm,
 Sprang from the billows of the formless flood, 400
 Which shrank and fled; and with that Fiend of blood
 Renewed the doubtful war . . . Thrones then first shook,
 And earth's immense and trampled multitude
 In hope on their own powers began to look,
 And Fear, the demon pale, his sanguine shrine forsook. 405

XXXII

'Then Greece arose, and to its bards and sages,
 In dream, the golden-pinioned Genii came,
 Even where they slept amid the night of ages,
 Steeping their hearts in the divinest flame
 Which thy breath kindled, Power of holiest name! 410
 And oft in cycles since, when darkness gave
 New weapons to thy foe, their sunlike fame
 Upon the combat shone—a light to save,
 Like Paradise spread forth beyond the shadowy grave.

XXXIII

'Such is this conflict—when mankind doth strive 415
 With its oppressors in a strife of blood,
 Or when free thoughts, like lightnings, are alive,
 And in each bosom of the multitude
 Justice and truth with Custom's hydra brood
 Wage silent war; when Priests and Kings dissemble 420
 In smiles or frowns their fierce disquietude,
 When round pure hearts a host of hopes assemble,
 The Snake and Eagle meet—the world's foundations tremble!

XXXIV

'Thou hast beheld that fight—when to thy home
 Thou dost return, steep not its hearth in tears; 425
 Though thou may'st hear that earth is now become
 The tyrant's garbage, which to his compeers,
 The vile reward of their dishonoured years,

He will dividing give.—The victor Fiend,
 Omnipotent of yore, now quails, and fears 430
 His triumph dearly won, which soon will lend
 An impulse swift and sure to his approaching end.

XXXV

‘List, stranger, list, mine is an human form,
 Like that thou wearest—touch me—shrink not now!
 My hand thou feel’st is not a ghost’s, but warm 435
 With human blood.—’Twas many years ago,
 Since first my thirsting soul aspired to know
 The secrets of this wondrous world, when deep
 My heart was pierced with sympathy, for woe
 Which could not be mine own—and thought did keep, 440
 In dream, unnatural watch beside an infant’s sleep.

XXXVI

‘Woe could not be mine own, since far from men
 I dwelt, a free and happy orphan child,
 By the sea-shore, in a deep mountain-glen;
 And near the waves, and through the forests wild, 445
 I roamed, to storm and darkness reconciled:
 For I was calm while tempest shook the sky:
 But when the breathless heavens in beauty smiled,
 I wept, sweet tears, yet too tumultuously
 For peace, and clasped my hands aloft in ecstasy. 450

XXXVII

‘These were forebodings of my fate—before
 A woman’s heart beat in my virgin breast,
 It had been nurtured in divinest lore:
 A dying poet gave me books, and blessed 455
 With wild but holy talk the sweet unrest
 In which I watched him as he died away—
 A youth with hoary hair—a fleeting guest
 Of our lone mountains: and this lore did sway
 My spirit like a storm, contending there alway.

XXXVIII

‘Thus the dark tale which history doth unfold 460
 I knew, but not, methinks, as others know,
 For they weep not; and Wisdom had unrolled
 The clouds which hide the gulf of mortal woe,—
 To few can she that warning vision show—
 For I loved all things with intense devotion; 465
 So that when Hope’s deep source in fullest flow
 Like earthquake did uplift the stagnant ocean
 Of human thoughts—mine shook beneath the wide emotion.

XXXIX

'When first the living blood through all these veins
 Kindled a thought in sense, great France sprang forth, 470
 And seized, as if to break, the ponderous chains
 Which bind in woe the nations of the earth.
 I saw, and started from my cottage-hearth;
 And to the clouds and waves in tameless gladness,
 Shrieked, till they caught immeasurable mirth— 475
 And laughed in light and music: soon, sweet madness
 Was poured upon my heart, a soft and thrilling sadness.

XL

'Deep slumber fell on me:—my dreams were fire—
 Soft and delightful thoughts did rest and hover
 Like shadows o'er my brain; and strange desire, 480
 The tempest of a passion, raging over
 My tranquil soul, its depths with light did cover,—
 Which passed; and calm, and darkness, sweeter far,
 Came—then I loved; but not a human lover!
 For when I rose from sleep, the Morning Star 485
 Shone through the woodbine-wreaths which round my casement were.

XLI

'Twas like an eye which seemed to smile on me.
 I watched, till by the sun made pale, it sank
 Under the billows of the heaving sea;
 But from its beams deep love my spirit drank, 490
 And to my brain the boundless world now shrank
 Into one thought—one image—yes, for ever!
 Even like the dayspring, poured on vapours dank,
 The beams of that one Star did shoot and quiver
 Through my benighted mind—and were extinguished never. 495

XLII

'The day passed thus: at night, methought in dream
 A shape of speechless beauty did appear:
 It stood like light on a careering stream
 Of golden clouds which shook the atmosphere;
 A winged youth, his radiant brow did wear 500
 The Morning Star: a wild dissolving bliss
 Over my frame he breathed, approaching near,
 And bent his eyes of kindling tenderness
 Near mine, and on my lips impressed a lingering kiss,—

XLIII

'And said: "A Spirit loves thee, mortal maiden, 505
 How wilt thou prove thy worth?" Then joy and sleep
 Together fled, my soul was deeply laden,
 And to the shore I went to muse and weep;
 But as I moved, over my heart did creep

A joy less soft, but more profound and strong 510
 Than my sweet dream; and it forbade to keep
 The path of the sea-shore: that Spirit's tongue
 Seemed whispering in my heart, and bore my steps along.

XLIV

'How, to that vast and peopled city led,
 Which was a field of holy warfare then, 515
 I walked among the dying and the dead,
 And shared in fearless deeds with evil men,
 Calm as an angel in the dragon's den—
 How I braved death for liberty and truth,
 And spurned at peace, and power, and fame—and when 520
 Those hopes had lost the glory of their youth,
 How sadly I returned—might move the hearer's ruth:

XLV

'Warm tears throng fast! the tale may not be said—
 Know then, that when this grief had been subdued,
 I was not left, like others, cold and dead; 525
 The Spirit whom I loved, in solitude
 Sustained his child: the tempest-shaken wood,
 The waves, the fountains, and the hush of night—
 These were his voice, and well I understood
 His smile divine, when the calm sea was bright 530
 With silent stars, and Heaven was breathless with delight.

XLVI

'In lonely glens, amid the roar of rivers,
 When the dim nights were moonless, have I known
 Joys which no tongue can tell; my pale lip quivers
 When thought revisits them:—know thou alone, 535
 That after many wondrous years were flown,
 I was awakened by a shriek of woe;
 And over me a mystic robe was thrown,
 By viewless hands, and a bright Star did glow
 Before my steps—the Snake then met his mortal foe.' 540

XLVII

'Thou fearest not then the Serpent on thy heart?'
 'Fear it!' she said, with brief and passionate cry,
 And spake no more: that silence made me start—
 I looked, and we were sailing pleasantly,
 Swift as a cloud between the sea and sky; 545
 Beneath the rising moon seen far away,
 Mountains of ice, like sapphire, piled on high,
 Hemming the horizon round, in silence lay
 On the still waters—these we did approach alway.

XLVIII

And swift and swifter grew the vessel's motion,
 So that a dizzy trance fell on my brain— 550
 Wild music woke me: we had passed the ocean
 Which girds the pole, Nature's remotest reign—
 And we glode fast o'er a pellucid plain
 Of waters, azure with the noontide day. 555
 Ethereal mountains shone around—a Fane
 Stood in the midst, girt by green isles which lay
 On the blue sunny deep, resplendent far away.

XLIX

It was a Temple, such as mortal hand
 Has never built, nor ecstasy, nor dream 560
 Reared in the cities of enchanted land:
 'Twas likest Heaven, ere yet day's purple stream
 Ebbs o'er the western forest, while the gleam
 Of the unrisen moon among the clouds
 Is gathering—when with many a golden beam 565
 The thronging constellations rush in crowds,
 Paving with fire the sky and the marmoreal floods.

L

Like what may be conceived of this vast dome,
 When from the depths which thought can seldom pierce
 Genius beholds it rise, his native home, 570
 Girt by the deserts of the Universe;
 Yet, nor in painting's light, or mightier verse,
 Or sculpture's marble language, can invest
 That shape to mortal sense—such glooms immerse
 That incommunicable sight, and rest 575
 Upon the labouring brain and overburdened breast.

LI

Winding among the lawny islands fair,
 Whose bosmy forests starred the shadowy deep,
 The wingless boat paused where an ivory stair
 Its fretwork in the crystal sea did steep, 580
 Encircling that vast Fane's aerial heap:
 We disembarked, and through a portal wide
 We passed—whose roof of moonstone carved, did keep
 A glimmering o'er the forms on every side,
 Sculptures like life and thought; immovable, deep-eyed. 585

LII

We came to a vast hall, whose glorious roof
 Was diamond, which had drank the lightning's sheen
 In darkness, and now poured it through the woof
 Of spell-inwoven clouds hung there to screen
 Its blinding splendour—through such veil was seen 590

That work of subtlest power, divine and rare;
 Orb above orb, with starry shapes between,
 And hornèd moons, and meteors strange and fair,
 On night-black columns poised—one hollow hemisphere!

LIII

Ten thousand columns in that quivering light 595
 Distinct—between whose shafts wound far away
 The long and labyrinthine aisles—more bright
 With their own radiance than the Heaven of Day;
 And on the jasper walls around, there lay
 Paintings, the poesy of mightiest thought, 600
 Which did the Spirit's history display;
 A tale of passionate change, divinely taught,
 Which, in their wingèd dance, unconscious Genii wrought.

LIV

Beneath, there sate on many a sapphire throne,
 The Great, who had departed from mankind, 605
 A mighty Senate;—some, whose white hair shone
 Like mountain snow, mild, beautiful, and blind;
 Some, female forms, whose gestures beamed with mind;
 And ardent youths, and children bright and fair;
 And some had lyres whose strings were intertwined 610
 With pale and clinging flames, which ever there
 Waked faint yet thrilling sounds that pierced the crystal air.

LV

One seat was vacant in the midst, a throne,
 Reared on a pyramid like sculptured flame,
 Distinct with circling steps which rested on 615
 Their own deep fire—soon as the Woman came
 Into that hall, she shrieked the Spirit's name
 And fell; and vanished slowly from the sight.
 Darkness arose from her dissolving frame,
 Which gathering, filled that dome of woven light, 620
 Blotting its spherèd stars with supernatural night.

LVI

Then first, two glittering lights were seen to glide
 In circles on the amethystine floor,
 Small serpent eyes trailing from side to side,
 Like meteors on a river's grassy shore, 625
 They round each other rolled, dilating more
 And more—then rose, commingling into one,
 One clear and mighty planet hanging o'er
 A cloud of deepest shadow, which was thrown
 Athwart the glowing steps and the crystalline throne. 630

LVII

The cloud which rested on that cone of flame
 Was cloven; beneath the planet sate a Form,
 Fairer than tongue can speak or thought may frame,
 The radiance of whose limbs rose-like and warm
 Flowed forth, and did with softest light inform 635
 The shadowy dome, the sculptures, and the state
 Of those assembled shapes—with clinging charm
 Sinking upon their hearts and mine. He sate
 Majestic, yet most mild—calm, yet compassionate.

LVIII

Wonder and joy a passing faintness threw 640
 Over my brow—a hand supported me,
 Whose touch was magic strength: an eye of blue
 Looked into mine, like moonlight, soothingly;
 And a voice said:—‘Thou must a listener be
 This day—two mighty Spirits now return, 645
 Like birds of calm, from the world’s raging sea,
 They pour fresh light from Hope’s immortal urn;
 A tale of human power—despair not—list and learn!’

LIX

I looked, and lo! one stood forth eloquently,
 His eyes were dark and deep, and the clear brow 650
 Which shadowed them was like the morning sky,
 The cloudless Heaven of Spring, when in their flow
 Through the bright air, the soft winds as they blow
 Wake the green world—his gestures did obey
 The oracular mind that made his features glow, 655
 And where his curvèd lips half-open lay,
 Passion’s divinest stream had made impetuous way.

LX

Beneath the darkness of his outspread hair
 He stood thus beautiful: but there was One 660
 Who sate beside him like his shadow there,
 And held his hand—far lovelier—she was known
 To be thus fair, by the few lines alone
 Which through her floating locks and gathered cloak,
 Glances of soul-dissolving glory, shone:—
 None else beheld her eyes—in him they woke 665
 Memories which found a tongue as thus he silence broke.

CANTO II

I

THE starlight smile of children, the sweet looks
 Of women, the fair breast from which I fed,
 The murmur of the unreposing brooks,
 And the green light which, shifting overhead, 670
 Some tangled bower of vines around me shed,

The shells on the sea-sand, and the wild flowers,
 The lamplight through the rafters cheerly spread,
 And on the twining flax—in life's young hours
 These sights and sounds did nurse my spirit's folded powers. 675

II

In Argolis, beside the echoing sea,
 Such impulses within my mortal frame
 Arose, and they were dear to memory,
 Like tokens of the dead:—but others came 680
 Soon, in another shape: the wondrous fame
 Of the past world, the vital words and deeds
 Of minds whom neither time nor change can tame,
 Traditions dark and old, whence evil creeds
 Start forth, and whose dim shade a stream of poison feeds.

III

I heard, as all have heard, the various story 685
 Of human life, and wept unwilling tears.
 Feeble historians of its shame and glory,
 False disputants on all its hopes and fears,
 Victims who worshipped ruin,—chroniclers
 Of daily scorn, and slaves who loathed their state 690
 Yet, flattering power, had given its ministers
 A throne of judgement in the grave:—'twas fate,
 That among such as these my youth should seek its mate.

IV

The land in which I lived, by a fell bane
 Was withered up. Tyrants dwelt side by side, 695
 And stabled in our homes,—until the chain
 Stifled the captive's cry, and to abide
 That blasting curse men had no shame—all vied
 In evil, slave and despot; fear with lust
 Strange fellowship through mutual hate had tied, 700
 Like two dark serpents tangled in the dust,
 Which on the paths of men their mingling poison thrust.

V

Earth, our bright home, its mountains and its waters,
 And the ethereal shapes which are suspended
 Over its green expanse, and those fair daughters, 705
 The clouds, of Sun and Ocean, who have blended
 The colours of the air since first extended
 It cradled the young world, none wandered forth
 To see or feel: a darkness had descended
 On every heart: the light which shows its worth, 710
 Must among gentle thoughts and fearless take its birth.

VI

This vital world, this home of happy spirits,
 Was as a dungeon to my blasted kind;
 All that despair from murdered hope inherits
 They sought, and in their helpless misery blind, 715
 A deeper prison and heavier chains did find,
 And stronger tyrants:—a dark gulf before,
 The realm of a stern Ruler, yawned; behind,
 Terror and Time conflicting drove, and bore
 On their tempestuous flood the shrieking wretch from shore. 720

VII

Out of that Ocean's wrecks had Guilt and Woe
 Framed a dark dwelling for their homeless thought,
 And, starting at the ghosts which to and fro
 Glide o'er its dim and gloomy strand, had brought 725
 The worship thence which they each other taught.
 Well might men loathe their life, well might they turn
 Even to the ills again from which they sought
 Such refuge after death!—well might they learn
 To gaze on this fair world with hopeless unconcern!

VIII

For they all pined in bondage; body and soul, 730
 Tyrant and slave, victim and torturer, bent
 Before one Power, to which supreme control
 Over their will by their own weakness lent,
 Made all its many names omnipotent;
 All symbols of things evil, all divine; 735
 And hymns of blood or mockery, which rent
 The air from all its fanes, did intertwine
 Imposture's impious toils round each discordant shrine.

IX

I heard, as all have heard, life's various story,
 And in no careless heart transcribed the tale; 740
 But, from the sneers of men who had grown hoary
 In shame and scorn, from groans of crowds made pale
 By famine, from a mother's desolate wail
 O'er her polluted child, from innocent blood
 Poured on the earth, and brows anxious and pale 745
 With the heart's warfare; did I gather food
 To feed my many thoughts: a tameless multitude!

X

I wandered through the wrecks of days departed
 Far by the desolated shore, when even
 O'er the still sea and jagged islets darted 750
 The light of moonrise; in the northern Heaven,
 Among the clouds near the horizon driven,

The mountains lay beneath our planet pale;
 Around me, broken tombs and columns riven
 Looked vast in twilight, and the sorrowing gale
 Waked in those ruins gray its everlasting wail! 755

XI

I knew not who had framed these wonders then,
 Nor had I heard the story of their deeds;
 But dwellings of a race of mightier men,
 And monuments of less ungentle creeds 760
 Tell their own tale to him who wisely heeds
 The language which they speak; and now, to me
 The moonlight making pale the blooming weeds,
 The bright stars shining in the breathless sea,
 Interpreted those scrolls of mortal mystery. 765

XII

Such man has been, and such may yet become!
 Ay, wiser, greater, gentler, even than they
 Who on the fragments of yon shattered dome
 Have stamped the sign of power—I felt the sway
 Of the vast stream of ages bear away 770
 My floating thoughts—my heart beat loud and fast—
 Even as a storm let loose beneath the ray
 Of the still moon, my spirit onward past
 Beneath truth's steady beams upon its tumult cast.

XIII

It shall be thus no more! too long, too long,
 Sons of the glorious dead, have ye lain bound
 In darkness and in ruin!—Hope is strong,
 Justice and Truth their wingèd child have found—
 Awake! arise! until the mighty sound
 Of your career shall scatter in its gust 780
 The thrones of the oppressor, and the ground
 Hide the last altar's unregarded dust,
 Whose Idol has so long betrayed your impious trust!

XIV

It must be so—I will arise and waken
 The multitude, and like a sulphurous hill,
 Which on a sudden from its snows has shaken 785
 The swoon of ages, it shall burst and fill
 The world with cleansing fire: it must, it will—
 It may not be restrained!—and who shall stand
 Amid the rocking earthquake steadfast still,
 But Laon? on high Freedom's desert land 790
 A tower whose marble walls the leaguèd storms withstand!

XV

One summer night, in commune with the hope
 Thus deeply fed, amid those ruins gray
 I watched, beneath the dark sky's starry cope; 795
 And ever from that hour upon me lay
 The burden of this hope, and night or day,
 In vision or in dream, clove to my breast:
 Among mankind, or when gone far away
 To the lone shores and mountains, 'twas a guest 800
 Which followed where I fled, and watched when I did rest.

XVI

These hopes found words through which my spirit sought
 To weave a bondage of such sympathy,
 As might create some response to the thought
 Which ruled me now—and as the vapours lie 805
 Bright in the outspread morning's radiancy,
 So were these thoughts invested with the light
 Of language: and all bosoms made reply
 On which its lustre streamed, whene'er it might
 Through darkness wide and deep those tranced spirits smite. 810

XVII

Yes, many an eye with dizzy tears was dim,
 And oft I thought to clasp my own heart's brother,
 When I could feel the listener's senses swim,
 And hear his breath its own swift gaspings smother
 Even as my words evoked them—and another, 815
 And yet another, I did fondly deem,
 Felt that we all were sons of one great mother;
 And the cold truth such sad reverse did seem,
 As to awake in grief from some delightful dream.

XVIII

Yes, oft beside the ruined labyrinth 820
 Which skirts the hoary caves of the green deep,
 Did Laon and his friend, on one gray plinth,
 Round whose worn base the wild waves hiss and leap,
 Resting at eve, a lofty converse keep:
 And that this friend was false, may now be said 825
 Calmly—that he like other men could weep
 Tears which are lies, and could betray and spread
 Snares for that guileless heart which for his own had bled.

XIX

Then, had no great aim recompensed my sorrow,
 I must have sought dark respite from its stress 830
 In dreamless rest, in sleep that sees no morrow—
 For to tread life's dismaying wilderness
 Without one smile to cheer, one voice to bless,

Amid the snares and scoffs of human kind,
 Is hard—but I betrayed it not, nor less
 With love that scorned return, sought to unbind
 The interwoven clouds which make its wisdom blind. 835

XX

With deathless minds which leave where they have passed
 A path of light, my soul communion knew;
 Till from that glorious intercourse, at last, 840
 As from a mine of magic store, I drew
 Words which were weapons;—round my heart there grew
 The adamantine armour of their power,
 And from my fancy wings of golden hue
 Sprang forth—yet not alone from wisdom's tower, 845
 A minister of truth, these plumes young Laon bore.

XXI

An orphan with my parents lived, whose eyes
 Were lodestars of delight, which drew me home
 When I might wander forth; nor did I prize
 Aught human thing beneath Heaven's mighty dome 850
 Beyond this child: so when sad hours were come,
 And baffled hope like ice still clung to me,
 Since kin were cold, and friends had now become
 Heartless and false, I turned from all, to be,
 Cythna, the only source of tears and smiles to thee. 855

XXII

What wert thou then? A child most infantine,
 Yet wandering far beyond that innocent age
 In all but its sweet looks and mien divine:
 Even then, methought, with the world's tyrant rage
 A patient warfare thy young heart did wage, 860
 When those soft eyes of scarcely conscious thought
 Some tale, or thine own fancies, would engage
 To overflow with tears, or converse fraught
 With passion, o'er their depths its fleeting light had wrought.

XXIII

She moved upon this earth a shape of brightness, 865
 A power, that from its objects scarcely drew
 One impulse of her being—in her lightness
 Most like some radiant cloud of morning dew,
 Which wanders through the waste air's pathless blue,
 To nourish some far desert: she did seem 870
 Beside me, gathering beauty as she grew,
 Like the bright shade of some immortal dream
 Which walks, when tempest sleeps, the wave of life's dark stream.

XXIV

As mine own shadow was this child to me,
 A second self, far dearer and more fair ; 875
 Which clothed in undissolving radiancy
 All those steep paths which languor and despair
 Of human things, had made so dark and bare,
 But which I trod alone—nor, till bereft
 Of friends, and overcome by lonely care, 880
 Knew I what solace for that loss was left,
 Though by a bitter wound my trusting heart was cleft.

XXV

Once she was dear, now she was all I had
 To love in human life—this playmate sweet,
 This child of twelve years old—so she was made 885
 My sole associate, and her willing feet
 Wandered with mine where earth and ocean meet,
 Beyond the æreal mountains whose vast cells
 The unreposing billows ever beat,
 Through forests wide and old, and lawny dells 890
 Where boughs of incense droop over the emerald wells.

XXVI

And warm and light I felt her clasping hand
 When twined in mine: she followed where I went,
 Through the lone paths of our immortal land.
 It had no waste but some memorial lent 895
 Which strung me to my toil—some monument
 Vital with mind: then, Cythna by my side,
 Until the bright and beaming day were spent,
 Would rest, with looks entreating to abide,
 Too earnest and too sweet ever to be denied. 900

XXVII

And soon I could not have refused her—thus
 For ever, day and night, we two were ne'er
 Parted, but when brief sleep divided us:
 And when the pauses of the lulling air
 Of noon beside the sea, had made a lair 905
 For her soothed senses, in my arms she slept,
 And I kept watch over her slumbers there,
 While, as the shifting visions o'er her swept,
 Amid her innocent rest by turns she smiled and wept.

XXVIII

And, in the murmur of her dreams was heard 910
 Sometimes the name of Laon:—suddenly
 She would arise, and, like the secret bird
 Whom sunset wakens, fill the shore and sky
 With her sweet accents—a wild melody!

Hymns which my soul had woven to Freedom, strong 915
 The source of passion, whence they rose, to be;
 Triumphant strains, which, like a spirit's tongue,
 To the enchanted waves that child of glory sung—

XXIX

Her white arms lifted through the shadowy stream
 Of her loose hair—oh, excellently great 920
 Seemed to me then my purpose, the vast theme
 Of those impassioned songs, when Cythna sate
 Amid the calm which rapture doth create
 After its tumult, her heart vibrating,
 Her spirit o'er the ocean's floating state 925
 From her deep eyes far wandering, on the wing
 Of visions that were mine, beyond its utmost spring.

XXX

For, before Cythna loved it, had my song
 Peopled with thoughts the boundless universe,
 A mighty congregation, which were strong 930
 Where'er they trod the darkness to disperse
 The cloud of that unutterable curse
 Which clings upon mankind:—all things became
 Slaves to my holy and heroic verse,
 Earth, sea and sky, the planets, life and fame 935
 And fate, or whate'er else binds the world's wondrous frame.

XXXI

And this beloved child thus felt the sway
 Of my conceptions, gathering like a cloud
 The very wind on which it rolls away:
 Hers too were all my thoughts, ere yet, endowed 940
 With music and with light, their fountains flowed
 In poesy; and her still and earnest face,
 Pallid with feelings which intensely glowed
 Within, was turned on mine with speechless grace,
 Watching the hopes which there her heart had learned to trace.

XXXII

In me, communion with this purest being 946
 Kindled intenser zeal, and made me wise
 In knowledge, which, in hers mine own mind seeing,
 Left in the human world few mysteries:
 How without fear of evil or disguise 950
 Was Cythna!—what a spirit strong and mild,
 Which death, or pain or peril could despise,
 Yet melt in tenderness! what genius wild
 Yet mighty, was enclosed within one simple child!

XXXIII

New lore was this—old age, with its gray hair,
 And wrinkled legends of unworthy things, 955
 And icy sneers, is nought: it cannot dare
 To burst the chains which life for ever flings
 On the entangled soul's aspiring wings,
 So is it cold and cruel, and is made 960
 The careless slave of that dark power which brings
 Evil, like blight, on man, who, still betrayed,
 Laughs o'er the grave in which his living hopes are laid.

XXXIV

Nor are the strong and the severe to keep
 The empire of the world: thus Cythna taught 965
 Even in the visions of her eloquent sleep,
 Unconscious of the power through which she wrought
 The woof of such intelligible thought,
 As from the tranquil strength which cradled lay
 In her smile-peopled rest, my spirit sought 970
 Why the deceiver and the slave has sway
 O'er heralds so divine of truth's arising day.

XXXV

Within that fairest form, the female mind
 Untainted by the poison-clouds which rest
 On the dark world, a sacred home did find: 975
 But else, from the wide earth's maternal breast,
 Victorious Evil, which had dispossessed
 All native power, had those fair children torn,
 And made them slaves to soothe his vile unrest,
 And minister to lust its joys forlorn, 980
 Till they had learned to breathe the atmosphere of scorn.

XXXVI

This misery was but coldly felt, till she
 Became my only friend, who had endured
 My purpose with a wider sympathy;
 Thus, Cythna mourned with me the servitude 985
 In which the half of humankind were mewed
 Victims of lust and hate, the slaves of slaves,
 She mourned that grace and power were thrown as food
 To the hyaena lust, who, among graves,
 Over his loathed meal, laughing in agony, raves. 990

XXXVII

And I, still gazing on that glorious child,
 Even as these thoughts flushed o'er her:—'Cythna sweet,
 Well with the world art thou unreconciled;
 Never will peace and human nature meet
 Till free and equal man and woman greet 995

Domestic peace; and ere this power can make
 In human hearts its calm and holy seat,
 This slavery must be broken '—as I spake,
 From Cythna's eyes a light of exultation brake.

XXXVIII

She replied earnestly:—'It shall be mine,
 This task, mine, Laon!—thou hast much to gain;
 Nor wilt thou at poor Cythna's pride repine,
 If she should lead a happy female train
 To meet thee over the rejoicing plain,
 When myriads at thy call shall throng around
 The Golden City.'—Then the child did strain
 My arm upon her tremulous heart, and wound
 Her own about my neck, till some reply she found.

XXXIX

I smiled, and spake not.—'Wherefore dost thou smile
 At what I say? Laon, I am not weak,
 And though my cheek might become pale the while,
 With thee, if thou desirest, will I seek
 Through their array of banded slaves to wreak
 Ruin upon the tyrants. I had thought
 It was more hard to turn my unpractised cheek
 To scorn and shame, and this beloved spot
 And thee, O dearest friend, to leave and murmur not.

XL

'Whence came I what I am? Thou, Laon, knowest
 How a young child should thus undaunted be;
 Methinks, it is a power which thou bestowest,
 Through which I seek, by most resembling thee,
 So to become most good and great and free,
 Yet far beyond this Ocean's utmost roar
 In towers and huts are many like to me,
 Who, could they see thine eyes, or feel such lore
 As I have learnt from them, like me would fear no more.

XLI

'Think'st thou that I shall speak unskilfully,
 And none will heed me? I remember now,
 How once, a slave in tortures doomed to die,
 Was saved, because in accents sweet and low
 He sung a song his Judge loved long ago,
 As he was led to death.—All shall relent
 Who hear me—tears, as mine have flowed, shall flow,
 Hearts beat as mine now beats, with such intent
 As renovates the world; a will omnipotent!

XLII

'Yes, I will tread Pride's golden palaces,
 Through Penury's roofless huts and squalid cells
 Will I descend, where'er in abjectness
 Woman with some vile slave her tyrant dwells,
 There with the music of thine own sweet spells 1040
 Will disenchant the captives, and will pour
 For the despairing, from the crystal wells
 Of thy deep spirit, reason's mighty lore,
 And power shall then abound, and hope arise once more.

XLIII

'Can man be free if woman be a slave? 1045
 Chain one who lives, and breathes this boundless air,
 To the corruption of a closèd grave!
 Can they whose mates are beasts, condemned to bear
 Scorn, heavier far than toil or anguish, dare
 To trample their oppressors? in their home 1050
 Among their babes, thou knowest a curse would wear
 The shape of woman—hoary Crime would come
 Behind, and Fraud rebuild religion's tottering dome.

XLIV

'I am a child:—I would not yet depart.
 When I go forth alone, bearing the lamp 1055
 Aloft which thou hast kindled in my heart,
 Millions of slaves from many a dungeon damp
 Shall leap in joy, as the benumbing cramp
 Of ages leaves their limbs—no ill may harm
 Thy Cythna ever—truth its radiant stamp 1060
 Has fixed, as an invulnerable charm
 Upon her children's brow, dark Falsehood to disarm.

XLV

'Wait yet awhile for the appointed day—
 Thou wilt depart, and I with tears shall stand
 Watching thy dim sail skirt the ocean gray; 1065
 Amid the dwellers of this lonely land
 I shall remain alone—and thy command
 Shall then dissolve the world's unquiet trance,
 And, multitudinous as the desert sand
 Borne on the storm, its millions shall advance, 1070
 Thronging round thee, the light of their deliverance.

XLVI

'Then, like the forests of some pathless mountain,
 Which from remotest glens two warring winds
 Involve in fire which not the loosened fountain
 Of broadest floods might quench, shall all the kinds 1075
 Of evil, catch from our uniting minds

The spark which must consume them;—Cythna then
 Will have cast off the impotence that binds
 Her childhood now, and through the paths of men
 Will pass, as the charmed bird that haunts the serpent's den. 1080

XLVII

'We part!—O Laon, I must dare nor tremble
 To meet those looks no more!—Oh, heavy stroke!
 Sweet brother of my soul! can I dissemble
 The agony of this thought?'—As thus she spoke
 The gathered sobs her quivering accents broke, 1085
 And in my arms she hid her beating breast.
 I remained still for tears—sudden she woke
 As one awakes from sleep, and wildly pressed
 My bosom, her whole frame impetuously possessed.

XLVIII

'We part to meet again—but yon blue waste, 1090
 Yon desert wide and deep holds no recess,
 Within whose happy silence, thus embraced
 We might survive all ills in one caress:
 Nor doth the grave—I fear 'tis passionless—
 Nor yon cold vacant Heaven:—we meet again 1095
 Within the minds of men, whose lips shall bless
 Our memory, and whose hopes its light retain
 When these dissevered bones are trodden in the plain.'

XLIX

I could not speak, though she had ceased, for now
 The fountains of her feeling, swift and deep, 1100
 Seemed to suspend the tumult of their flow;
 So we arose, and by the starlight steep
 Went homeward—neither did we speak nor weep,
 But, pale, were calm with passion—thus subdued
 Like evening shades that o'er the mountains creep, 1105
 We moved towards our home; where, in this mood,
 Each from the other sought refuge in solitude.

CANTO III

I

WHAT thoughts had sway o'er Cythna's lonely slumber
 That night, I know not; but my own did seem
 As if they might ten thousand years outnumber 1110
 Of waking life, the visions of a dream
 Which hid in one dim gulf the troubled stream
 Of mind; a boundless chaos wild and vast,
 Whose limits yet were never memory's theme:
 And I lay struggling as its whirlwinds passed, 1115
 Sometimes for rapture sick, sometimes for pain aghast.

II

Two hours, whose mighty circle did embrace
 More time than might make gray the infant world,
 Rolled thus, a weary and tumultuous space:
 When the third came, like mist on breezes curled, 1120
 From my dim sleep a shadow was unfurled:
 Methought, upon the threshold of a cave
 I sate with Cythna; drooping briony, pearly
 With dew from the wild streamlet's shattered wave,
 Hung, where we sate to taste the joys which Nature gave. 1125

III

We lived a day as we were wont to live,
 But Nature had a robe of glory on,
 And the bright air o'er every shape did weave
 Intenser hues, so that the herbless stone,
 The leafless bough among the leaves alone, 1130
 Had being clearer than its own could be,
 And Cythna's pure and radiant self was shown,
 In this strange vision, so divine to me,
 That, if I loved before, now love was agony.

IV

Morn fled, noon came, evening, then night descended, 1135
 And we prolonged calm talk beneath the sphere
 Of the calm moon—when suddenly was blended
 With our repose a nameless sense of fear;
 And from the cave behind I seemed to hear
 Sounds gathering upwards!—accents incomplete, 1140
 And stifled shrieks,—and now, more near and near,
 A tumult and a rush of thronging feet
 The cavern's secret depths beneath the earth did beat.

V

The scene was changed, and away, away, away!
 Through the air and over the sea we sped, 1145
 And Cythna in my sheltering bosom lay,
 And the winds bore me—through the darkness spread
 Around, the gaping earth then vomited
 Legions of foul and ghastly shapes, which hung
 Upon my flight; and ever, as we fled, 1150
 They plucked at Cythna—soon to me then clung
 A sense of actual things those monstrous dreams among.

VI

And I lay struggling in the impotence
 Of sleep, while outward life had burst its bound,
 Though, still deluded, strove the tortured sense 1155
 To its dire wanderings to adapt the sound
 Which in the light of morn was poured around

Our dwelling—breathless, pale, and unaware
 I rose, and all the cottage crowded found
 With armed men, whose glittering swords were bare, 1160
 And whose degraded limbs the tyrant's garb did wear.

VII

And, ere with rapid lips and gathered brow
 I could demand the cause—a feeble shriek—
 It was a feeble shriek, faint, far and low,
 Arrested me—my mien grew calm and meek, 1165
 And grasping a small knife, I went to seek
 That voice among the crowd—'twas Cythna's cry!
 Beneath most calm resolve did agony wreak
 Its whirlwind rage:—so I passed quietly
 Till I beheld, where bound, that dearest child did lie. 1170

VIII

I started to behold her, for delight
 And exultation, and a joyance free,
 Solemn, serene and lofty, filled the light
 Of the calm smile with which she looked on me:
 So that I feared some brainless ecstasy, 1175
 Wrought from that bitter woe, had wildered her—
 'Farewell! farewell!' she said, as I drew nigh.
 'At first my peace was marred by this strange stir,
 Now I am calm as truth—its chosen minister.

IX

'Look not so, Laon—say farewell in hope, 1180
 These bloody men are but the slaves who bear
 Their mistress to her task—it was my scope
 The slavery where they drag me now, to share,
 And among captives willing chains to wear
 Awhile—the rest thou knowest—return, dear friend! 1185
 Let our first triumph trample the despair
 Which would ensnare us now, for in the end,
 In victory or in death our hopes and fears must blend.'

X

These words had fallen on my unheeding ear,
 Whilst I had watched the motions of the crew 1190
 With seeming-careless glance; not many were
 Around her, for their comrades just withdrew
 To guard some other victim—so I drew
 My knife, and with one impulse, suddenly
 All unaware three of their number slew, 1195
 And grasped a fourth by the throat, and with loud cry
 My countrymen invoked to death or liberty!

XI

What followed then, I know not—for a stroke
 On my raised arm and naked head, came down,
 Filling my eyes with blood—when I awoke, 1200
 I felt that they had bound me in my swoon,
 And up a rock which overhangs the town,
 By the steep path were bearing me: below,
 The plain was filled with slaughter,—overthrown
 The vineyards and the harvests, and the glow 1205
 Of blazing roofs shone far o'er the white Ocean's flow.

XII

Upon that rock a mighty column stood,
 Whose capital seemed sculptured in the sky,
 Which to the wanderers o'er the solitude
 Of distant seas, from ages long gone by, 1210
 Had made a landmark; o'er its height to fly
 Scarcely the cloud, the vulture, or the blast,
 Has power—and when the shades of evening lie
 On Earth and Ocean, its carved summits cast
 The sunken daylight far through the aerial waste. 1215

XIII

They bore me to a cavern in the hill
 Beneath that column, and unbound me there:
 And one did strip me stark; and one did fill
 A vessel from the putrid pool; one bare
 A lighted torch, and four with friendless care 1220
 Guided my steps the cavern-paths along,
 Then up a steep and dark and narrow stair
 We wound, until the torch's fiery tongue
 Amid the gushing day beamless and pallid hung.

XIV

They raised me to the platform of the pile, 1225
 That column's dizzy height:—the grate of brass
 Through which they thrust me, open stood the while,
 As to its ponderous and suspended mass,
 With chains which eat into the flesh, alas!
 With brazen links, my naked limbs they bound: 1230
 The grate, as they departed to repass,
 With horrid clangour fell, and the far sound
 Of their retiring steps in the dense gloom were drowned.

XV

The noon was calm and bright:—around that column
 The overhanging sky and circling sea 1235
 Spread forth in silentness profound and solemn
 The darkness of brief frenzy cast on me,
 So that I knew not my own misery:

The islands and the mountains in the day
 Like clouds reposed afar; and I could see 1240
 The town among the woods below that lay,
 And the dark rocks which bound the bright and glassy bay.

XVI

It was so calm, that scarce the feathery weed
 Sown by some eagle on the topmost stone
 Swayed in the air:—so bright, that noon did breed 1245
 No shadow in the sky beside mine own—
 Mine, and the shadow of my chain alone.
 Below, the smoke of roofs involved in flame
 Rested like night, all else was clearly shown
 In that broad glare, yet sound to me none came, 1250
 But of the living blood that ran within my frame.

XVII

The peace of madness fled, and ah, too soon!
 A ship was lying on the sunny main,
 Its sails were flagging in the breathless noon—
 Its shadow lay beyond—that sight again 1255
 Waked, with its presence, in my trancèd brain
 The stings of a known sorrow, keen and cold:
 I knew that ship bore Cythna o'er the plain
 Of waters, to her blighting slavery sold,
 And watched it with such thoughts as must remain untold. 1260

XVIII

I watched, until the shades of evening wrapped
 Earth like an exhalation—then the bark
 Moved, for that calm was by the sunset snapped.
 It moved a speck upon the Ocean dark:
 Soon the wan stars came forth, and I could mark 1265
 Its path no more!—I sought to close mine eyes,
 But like the balls, their lids were stiff and stark;
 I would have risen, but ere that I could rise,
 My parchèd skin was split with piercing agonies.

XIX

I gnawed my brazen chain, and sought to sever 1270
 Its adamantine links, that I might die:
 O Liberty! forgive the base endeavour,
 Forgive me, if, reserved for victory,
 The Champion of thy faith e'er sought to fly.—
 That starry night, with its clear silence, sent 1275
 Tameless resolve which laughed at misery
 Into my soul—linkèd remembrance lent
 To that such power, to me such a severe content.

XX

To breathe, to be, to hope, or to despair
 And die, I questioned not ; nor, though the Sun 1280
 Its shafts of agony kindling through the air
 Moved over me, nor though in evening dun,
 Or when the stars their visible courses run,
 Or morning, the wide universe was spread
 In dreary calmness round me, did I shun 1285
 Its presence, nor seek refuge with the dead
 From one faint hope whose flower a dropping poison shed.

XXI

Two days thus passed—I neither raved nor died—
 Thirst raged within me, like a scorpion's nest
 Built in mine entrails ; I had spurned aside 1290
 The water-vessel, while despair possessed
 My thoughts, and now no drop remained ! The uprest
 Of the third sun brought hunger—but the crust
 Which had been left, was to my craving breast
 Fuel, not food. I chewed the bitter dust, 1295
 And bit my bloodless arm, and licked the brazen rust.

XXII

My brain began to fail when the fourth morn
 Burst o'er the golden isles—a fearful sleep,
 Which through the caverns dreary and forlorn
 Of the riven soul, sent its foul dreams to sweep 1300
 With whirlwind swiftness—a fall far and deep,—
 A gulf, a void, a sense of senselessness—
 These things dwelt in me, even as shadows keep
 Their watch in some dim charnel's loneliness,
 A shoreless sea, a sky sunless and planetless ! 1305

XXIII

The forms which peopled this terrific trance
 I well remember—like a choir of devils,
 Around me they involved a giddy dance ;
 Legions seemed gathering from the misty levels
 Of Ocean, to supply those ceaseless revels, 1310
 Foul, ceaseless shadows :—thought could not divide
 The actual world from these entangling evils,
 Which so bemocked themselves, that I descried
 All shapes like mine own self, hideously multiplied.

XXIV

The sense of day and night, of false and true, 1315
 Was dead within me. Yet two visions burst
 That darkness—one, as since that hour I knew,
 Was not a phantom of the realms accursed,
 Where then my spirit dwelt—but of the first

I know not yet, was it a dream or no.

1320

But both, though not distincter, were immersed
In hues which, when through memory's waste they flow,
Make their divided streams more bright and rapid now.

XXV

Methought that grate was lifted, and the seven

1325

Who brought me thither four stiff corpses bare,
And from the frieze to the four winds of Heaven

Hung them on high by the entangled hair:

Swarthy were three—the fourth was very fair:

As they retired, the golden moon upsprung,

And eagerly, out in the giddy air,

1330

Leaning that I might eat, I stretched and clung
Over the shapeless depth in which those corpses hung.

XXVI

A woman's shape, now lank and cold and blue,

The dwelling of the many-coloured worm,

Hung there; the white and hollow cheek I drew

1335

To my dry lips—what radiance did inform

Those horny eyes? whose was that withered form?

Alas, alas! it seemed that Cythna's ghost

Laughed in those looks, and that the flesh was warm

Within my teeth!—A whirlwind keen as frost

1340

Then in its sinking gulfs my sickening spirit tossed.

XXVII

Then seemed it that a tameless hurricane

Arose, and bore me in its dark career

Beyond the sun, beyond the stars that wane

On the verge of formless space—it languished there,

1345

And dying, left a silence lone and drear,

More horrible than famine:—in the deep

The shape of an old man did then appear,

Stately and beautiful; that dreadful sleep

His heavenly smiles dispersed, and I could wake and weep.

1350

XXVIII

And, when the blinding tears had fallen, I saw

That column, and those corpses, and the moon,

And felt the poisonous tooth of hunger gnaw

My vitals, I rejoiced, as if the boon

Of senseless death would be accorded soon;—

1355

When from that stony gloom a voice arose,

Solemn and sweet as when low winds attune

The midnight pines; the grate did then uncloze,

And on that reverend form the moonlight did repose.

XXIX

He struck my chains, and gently spake and smiled:
 As they were loosened by that Hermit old,
 Mine eyes were of their madness half beguiled,
 To answer those kind looks—he did enfold
 His giant arms around me, to uphold
 My wretched frame, my scorched limbs he wound
 In linen moist and balmy, and as cold
 As dew to drooping leaves;—the chain, with sound
 Like earthquake, through the chasm of that steep stair did bound,

XXX

As, lifting me, it fell!—What next I heard,
 Were billows leaping on the harbour-bar,
 And the shrill sea-wind, whose breath idly stirred
 My hair;—I looked abroad, and saw a star
 Shining beside a sail, and distant far
 That mountain and its column, the known mark
 Of those who in the wide deep wandering are,
 So that I feared some Spirit, fell and dark,
 In trance had lain me thus within a fiendish bark.

XXXI

For now indeed, over the salt sea-billow
 I sailed: yet dared not look upon the shape
 Of him who ruled the helm, although the pillow
 For my light head was hollowed in his lap,
 And my bare limbs his mantle did enwrap,
 Fearing it was a fiend: at last, he bent
 O'er me his aged face, as if to snap
 Those dreadful thoughts the gentle grandsire bent,
 And to my inmost soul his soothing looks he sent.

XXXII

A soft and healing potion to my lips
 At intervals he raised—now looked on high,
 To mark if yet the starry giant dips
 His zone in the dim sea—now cheeringly,
 Though he said little, did he speak to me.
 'It is a friend beside thee—take good cheer,
 Poor victim, thou art now at liberty!'
 I joyed as those a human tone to hear,
 Who in cells deep and lone have languished many a year.

XXXIII

A dim and feeble joy, whose glimpses oft
 Were quenched in a relapse of wildering dreams,
 Yet still methought we sailed, until aloft
 The stars of night grew pallid, and the beams
 Of morn descended on the ocean-streams,

And still that aged man, so grand and mild,
 Tended me, even as some sick mother seems
 To hang in hope over a dying child,
 Till in the azure East darkness again was piled.

XXXIV

And then the night-wind steaming from the shore, 1405
 Sent odours dying sweet across the sea,
 And the swift boat the little waves which bore,
 Were cut by its keen keel, though slantingly;
 Soon I could hear the leaves sigh, and could see
 The myrtle-blossoms starring the dim grove, 1410
 As past the pebbly beach the boat did flee
 On sidelong wing, into a silent cove,
 Where ebon pines a shade under the starlight wove.

CANTO IV

I

THE old man took the oars, and soon the bark
 Smote on the beach beside a tower of stone; 1415
 It was a crumbling heap, whose portal dark
 With blooming ivy-trails was overgrown;
 Upon whose floor the spangling sands were strown,
 And rarest sea-shells, which the eternal flood,
 Slave to the mother of the months, had thrown 1420
 Within the walls of that gray tower, which stood
 A changeling of man's art, nursed amid Nature's brood.

II

When the old man his boat had anchorèd,
 He wound me in his arms with tender care,
 And very few, but kindly words he said, 1425
 And bore me through the tower adown a stair,
 Whose smooth descent some ceaseless step to wear
 For many a year had fallen.—We came at last
 To a small chamber, which with mosses rare
 Was tapestried, where me his soft hands placed 1430
 Upon a couch of grass and oak-leaves interlaced.

III

The moon was darting through the lattices
 Its yellow light, warm as the beams of day—
 So warm, that to admit the dewy breeze,
 The old man opened them; the moonlight lay 1435
 Upon a lake whose waters wove their play
 Even to the threshold of that lonely home:
 Within was seen in the dim wavering ray
 The antique sculptured roof, and many a tome
 Whose lore had made that sage all that he had become. 1440

IV

The rock-built barrier of the sea was past,—
 And I was on the margin of a lake,
 A lonely lake, amid the forests vast
 And snowy mountains:—did my spirit wake
 From sleep as many-coloured as the snake 1445
 That girds eternity? in life and truth,
 Might not my heart its cravings ever slake?
 Was Cythna then a dream, and all my youth,
 And all its hopes and fears, and all its joy and ruth?

V

Thus madness came again,—a milder madness, 1450
 Which darkened nought but time's unquiet flow
 With supernatural shades of clinging sadness;
 That gentle Hermit, in my helpless woe,
 By my sick couch was busy to and fro,
 Like a strong spirit ministrant of good: 1455
 When I was healed, he led me forth to show
 The wonders of his sylvan solitude,
 And we together sate by that isle-fretted flood.

VI

He knew his soothing words to weave with skill
 From all my madness told; like mine own heart, 1460
 Of Cythna would he question me, until
 That thrilling name had ceased to make me start,
 From his familiar lips—it was not art,
 Of wisdom and of justice when he spoke—
 When mid soft looks of pity, there would dart 1465
 A glance as keen as is the lightning's stroke
 When it doth rive the knots of some ancestral oak.

VII

Thus slowly from my brain the darkness rolled,
 My thoughts their due array did re-assume
 Through the enchantments of that Hermit old; 1470
 Then I bethought me of the glorious doom
 Of those who sternly struggle to relume
 The lamp of Hope o'er man's bewildered lot,
 And, sitting by the waters, in the gloom
 Of eve, to that friend's heart I told my thought— 1475
 That heart which had grown old, but had corrupted not.

VIII

That hoary man had spent his livelong age
 In converse with the dead, who leave the stamp
 Of ever-burning thoughts on many a page,
 When they are gone into the senseless damp 1480
 Of graves;—his spirit thus became a lamp

Of splendour, like to those on which it fed:
 Through peopled haunts, the City and the Camp,
 Deep thirst for knowledge had his footsteps led,
 And all the ways of men among mankind he read. 1485

IX

But custom maketh blind and obdurate
 The loftiest hearts:—he had beheld the woe
 In which mankind was bound, but deemed that fate
 Which made them abject, would preserve them so;
 And in such faith, some steadfast joy to know, 1490
 He sought this cell: but when fame went abroad,
 That one in Argolis did undergo
 Torture for liberty, and that the crowd
 High truths from gifted lips had heard and understood;

X

And that the multitude was gathering wide,— 1495
 His spirit leaped within his aged frame,
 In lonely peace he could no more abide,
 But to the land on which the victor's flame
 Had fed, my native land, the Hermit came:
 Each heart was there a shield, and every tongue 1500
 Was as a sword, of truth—young Laon's name
 Rallied their secret hopes, though tyrants sung
 Hymns of triumphant joy our scattered tribes among.

XI

He came to the lone column on the rock,
 And with his sweet and mighty eloquence 1505
 The hearts of those who watched it did unlock,
 And made them melt in tears of penitence.
 They gave him entrance free to bear me thence.
 'Since this,' the old man said, 'seven years are spent,
 While slowly truth on thy benighted sense 1510
 Has crept; the hope which wildered it has lent
 Meanwhile, to me the power of a sublime intent.

XII

'Yes, from the records of my youthful state,
 And from the lore of bards and sages old,
 From whatsoe'er my wakened thoughts create 1515
 Out of the hopes of thine aspirings bold,
 Have I collected language to unfold
 Truth to my countrymen; from shore to shore
 Doctrines of human power my words have told,
 They have been heard, and men aspire to more 1520
 Than they have ever gained or ever lost of yore.

XIII

'In secret chambers parents read, and weep,
 My writings to their babes, no longer blind;
 And young men gather when their tyrants sleep,
 And vows of faith each to the other bind;
 And marriageable maidens, who have pined
 With love, till life seemed melting through their look,
 A warmer zeal, a nobler hope now find;
 And every bosom thus is rapt and shook,
 Like autumn's myriad leaves in one swoln mountain-brook.

XIV

'The tyrants of the Golden City tremble
 At voices which are heard about the streets,
 The ministers of fraud can scarce dissemble
 The lies of their own heart; but when one meets
 Another at the shrine, he inly weets,
 Though he says nothing, that the truth is known;
 Murderers are pale upon the judgement-seats,
 And gold grows vile even to the wealthy crone,
 And laughter fills the Fane, and curses shake the Throne.

XV

'Kind thoughts, and mighty hopes, and gentle deeds
 Abound, for fearless love, and the pure law
 Of mild equality and peace, succeeds
 To faiths which long have held the world in awe,
 Bloody and false, and cold:—as whirlpools draw
 All wrecks of Ocean to their chasm, the sway
 Of thy strong genius, Laon, which foresaw
 This hope, compels all spirits to obey,
 Which round thy secret strength now throng in wide array.

XVI

'For I have been thy passive instrument'—
 (As thus the old man spake, his countenance
 Gleamed on me like a spirit's)—'thou hast lent
 To me, to all, the power to advance
 Towards this unforeseen deliverance
 From our ancestral chains—ay, thou didst rear
 That lamp of hope on high, which time nor chance
 Nor change may not extinguish, and my share
 Of good, was o'er the world its gathered beams to bear.

XVII

'But I, alas! am both unknown and old,
 And though the woof of wisdom I know well
 To dye in hues of language, I am cold
 In seeming, and the hopes which inly dwell,
 My manners note that I did long repel;

But Laon's name to the tumultuous throng
 Were like the star whose beams the waves compel
 And tempests, and his soul-subduing tongue 1565
 Were as a lance to quell the mailèd crest of wrong.

XVIII

'Perchance blood need not flow, if thou at length
 Wouldst rise, perchance the very slaves would spare
 Their brethren and themselves; great is the strength
 Of words—for lately did a maiden fair, 1570
 Who from her childhood has been taught to bear
 The tyrant's heaviest yoke, arise, and make
 Her sex the law of truth and freedom hear,
 And with these quiet words—"For thine own sake
 I prithee spare me;"—did with ruth so take 1575

XIX

'All hearts, that even the torturer who had bound
 Her meek calm frame, ere it was yet impaled,
 Loosened her, weeping then; nor could be found
 One human hand to harm her—unassailed
 Therefore she walks through the great City, veiled 1580
 In virtue's adamantine eloquence,
 'Gainst scorn, and death and pain thus trebly mailed,
 And blending, in the smiles of that defence,
 The Serpent and the Dove, Wisdom and Innocence.

XX

'The wild-eyed women throng around her path: 1585
 From their luxurious dungeons, from the dust
 Of meaner thralls, from the oppressor's wrath,
 Or the caresses of his sated lust
 They congregate:—in her they put their trust;
 The tyrants send their armèd slaves to quell 1590
 Her power;—they, even like a thunder-gust
 Caught by some forest, bend beneath the spell
 Of that young maiden's speech, and to their chiefs rebel.

XXI

'Thus she doth equal laws and justice teach
 To woman, outraged and polluted long; 1595
 Gathering the sweetest fruit in human reach
 For those fair hands now free, while armèd wrong
 Trembles before her look, though it be strong;
 Thousands thus dwell beside her, virgins bright,
 And matrons with their babes, a stately throng! 1600
 Lovers renew the vows which they did plight
 In early faith, and hearts long parted now unite,

XXII

'And homeless orphans find a home near her,
 And those poor victims of the proud, no less,
 Fair wrecks, on whom the smiling world with stir, 1605
 Thrusts the redemption of its wickedness:—
 In squalid huts, and in its palaces
 Sits Lust alone, while o'er the land is borne
 Her voice, whose awful sweetness doth repress
 All evil, and her foes relenting turn, 1610
 And cast the vote of love in hope's abandoned urn.

XXIII

'So in the populous City, a young maiden
 Has baffled Havoc of the prey which he
 Marks as his own, whene'er with chains o'erladen
 Men make them arms to hurl down tyranny,— 1615
 False arbiter between the bound and free;
 And o'er the land, in hamlets and in towns
 The multitudes collect tumultuously,
 And throng in arms; but tyranny disowns
 Their claim, and gathers strength around its trembling thrones. 1620

XXIV

'Blood soon, although unwillingly, to shed,
 The free cannot forbear—the Queen of Slaves,
 The hoodwinked Angel of the blind and dead,
 Custom, with iron mace points to the graves
 Where her own standard desolately waves 1625
 Over the dust of Prophets and of Kings.
 Many yet stand in her array—"she paves
 Her path with human hearts," and o'er it flings
 The wildering gloom of her immeasurable wings.

XXV

'There is a plain beneath the City's wall, 1630
 Bounded by misty mountains, wide and vast,
 Millions there lift at Freedom's thrilling call
 Ten thousand standards wide, they load the blast
 Which bears one sound of many voices past,
 And startles on his throne their sceptred foe: 1635
 He sits amid his idle pomp aghast,
 And that his power hath passed away, doth know—
 Why pause the victor swords to seal his overthrow?

XXVI

'The tyrant's guards resistance yet maintain:
 Fearless, and fierce, and hard as beasts of blood, 1640
 They stand a speck amid the peopled plain;
 Carnage and ruin have been made their food
 From infancy—ill has become their good,

And for its hateful sake their will has wove
 The chains which eat their hearts—the multitude 1645
 Surrounding them, with words of human love,
 Seek from their own decay their stubborn minds to move.

XXVII

'Over the land is felt a sudden pause,
 As night and day those ruthless bands around,
 The watch of love is kept:—a trance which awes 1650
 The thoughts of men with hope—as, when the sound
 Of whirlwind, whose fierce blasts the waves and clouds confound,
 Dies suddenly, the mariner in fear
 Feels silence sink upon his heart—thus bound,
 The conquerors pause, and oh! may freemen ne'er 1655
 Clasp the relentless knees of Dread the murderer!

XXVIII

'If blood be shed, 'tis but a change and choice
 Of bonds,—from slavery to cowardice
 A wretched fall!—Uplift thy charmed voice!
 Pour on those evil men the love that lies 1660
 Hovering within those spirit-soothing eyes—
 Arise, my friend, farewell!'—As thus he spake,
 From the green earth lightly I did arise,
 As one out of dim dreams that doth awake,
 And looked upon the depth of that reposing lake. 1665

XXIX

I saw my countenance reflected there;—
 And then my youth fell on me like a wind
 Descending on still waters—my thin hair
 Was prematurely gray, my face was lined
 With channels, such as suffering leaves behind, 1670
 Not age; my brow was pale, but in my cheek
 And lips a flush of gnawing fire did find
 Their food and dwelling; though mine eyes might speak
 A subtle mind and strong within a frame thus weak.

XXX

And though their lustre now was spent and faded, 1675
 Yet in my hollow looks and withered mien
 The likeness of a shape for which was braided
 The brightest woof of genius, still was seen—
 One who, methought, had gone from the world's scene,
 And left it vacant—'twas her lover's face— 1680
 It might resemble her—it once had been
 The mirror of her thoughts, and still the grace
 Which her mind's shadow cast, left there a lingering trace.

XXXI

What then was I? She slumbered with the dead.
 Glory and joy and peace, had come and gone. 1685
 Doth the cloud perish, when the beams are fled

Which steeped its skirts in gold? or, dark and lone,
 Doth it not through the paths of night unknown,
 On outspread wings of its own wind upborne
 Pour rain upon the earth? The stars are shown, 1690
 When the cold moon sharpens her silver horn
 Under the sea, and make the wide night not forlorn.

XXXII

Strengthened in heart, yet sad, that aged man
 I left, with interchange of looks and tears,
 And lingering speech, and to the Camp began 1695
 My way. O'er many a mountain-chain which rears
 Its hundred crests aloft, my spirit bears
 My frame; o'er many a dale and many a moor,
 And gaily now meseems serene earth wears
 The blosmy spring's star-bright investiture, 1700
 A vision which aught sad from sadness might allure.

XXXIII

My powers revived within me, and I went
 As one whom winds waft o'er the bending grass,
 Through many a vale of that broad continent.
 At night when I reposed, fair dreams did pass 1705
 Before my pillow;—my own Cythna was,
 Not like a child of death, among them ever;
 When I arose from rest, a woful mass
 That gentlest sleep seemed from my life to sever,
 As if the light of youth were not withdrawn for ever. 1710

XXXIV

Aye as I went, that maiden who had reared
 The torch of Truth afar, of whose high deeds
 The Hermit in his pilgrimage had heard,
 Haunted my thoughts.—Ah, Hope its sickness feeds
 With whatso'er it finds, or flowers or weeds! 1715
 Could she be Cythna?—Was that corpse a shade
 Such as self-torturing thought from madness breeds?
 Why was this hope not torture? Yet it made
 A light around my steps which would not ever fade.

CANTO V

I

OVER the utmost hill at length I sped, 1720
 A snowy steep:—the moon was hanging low
 Over the Asian mountains, and outspread
 The plain, the City, and the Camp below,
 Skirted the midnight Ocean's glimmering flow;
 The City's moonlit spires and myriad lamps, 1725
 Like stars in a sublunar sky did glow,
 And fires blazed far amid the scattered camps,
 Like springs of flame, which burst where'er swift Earthquake stamps.

II

All slept but those in watchful arms who stood,
 And those who sate tending the beacon's light, 1730
 And the few sounds from that vast multitude
 Made silence more profound.—Oh, what a might
 Of human thought was cradled in that night!
 How many hearts impenetrably veiled
 Beat underneath its shade, what secret fight 1735
 Evil and good, in woven passions mailed,
 Waged through that silent throng; a war that never failed!

III

And now the Power of Good held victory,
 So, through the labyrinth of many a tent,
 Among the silent millions who did lie 1740
 In innocent sleep, exultingly I went;
 The moon had left Heaven desert now, but lent
 From eastern morn the first faint lustre showed
 An armèd youth—over his spear he bent
 His downward face.—‘A friend!’ I cried aloud, 1745
 And quickly common hopes made freemen understood.

IV

I sate beside him while the morning beam
 Crept slowly over Heaven, and talked with him
 Of those immortal hopes, a glorious theme!
 Which led us forth, until the stars grew dim: 1750
 And all the while, methought, his voice did swim
 As if it drownèd in remembrance were
 Of thoughts which make the moist eyes overbrim:
 At last, when daylight 'gan to fill the air,
 He looked on me, and cried in wonder—‘Thou art here!’ 1755

V

Then, suddenly, I knew it was the youth
 In whom its earliest hopes my spirit found;
 But envious tongues had stained his spotless truth,
 And thoughtless pride his love in silence bound,
 And shame and sorrow mine in toils had wound, 1760
 Whilst he was innocent, and I deluded;
 The truth now came upon me, on the ground
 Tears of repenting joy, which fast intruded.
 Fell fast, and o'er its peace our mingling spirits brooded.

VI

Thus, while with rapid lips and earnest eyes 1765
 We talked, a sound of sweeping conflict spread
 As from the earth did suddenly arise;
 From every tent roused by that clamour dread,
 Our bands outsprung and seized their arms—we sped

Towards the sound: our tribes were gathering far. 1770
 Those sanguine slaves amid ten thousand dead
 Stabbed in their sleep, trampled in treacherous war
 The gentle hearts whose power their lives had sought to spare.

VII

Like rabid snakes, that sting some gentle child
 Who brings them food, when winter false and fair 1775
 Allures them forth with its cold smiles, so wild
 They rage among the camp;—they overbear
 The patriot hosts—confusion, then despair
 Descends like night—when ‘Laon!’ one did cry:
 Like a bright ghost from Heaven that shout did scare 1780
 The slaves, and widening through the vaulted sky,
 Seemed sent from Earth to Heaven in sign of victory.

VIII

In sudden panic those false murderers fled,
 Like insect tribes before the northern gale:
 But swifter still, our hosts encompassèd 1785
 Their shattered ranks, and in a craggy vale,
 Where even their fierce despair might nought avail,
 Hemmed them around!—and then revenge and fear
 Made the high virtue of the patriots fail:
 One pointed on his foe the mortal spear— 1790
 I rushed before its point, and cried, ‘Forbear, forbear!’

IX

The spear transfixed my arm that was uplifted
 In swift expostulation, and the blood
 Gushed round its point: I smiled, and—‘Oh! thou gifted
 With eloquence which shall not be withstood, 1795
 Flow thus!’—I cried in joy, ‘thou vital flood,
 Until my heart be dry, ere thus the cause
 For which thou wert aught worthy be subdued—
 Ah, ye are pale,—ye weep,—your passions pause,—
 ’Tis well! ye feel the truth of love’s benignant laws. 1800

X

‘Soldiers, our brethren and our friends are slain.
 Ye murdered them, I think, as they did sleep!
 Alas, what have ye done? the slightest pain
 Which ye might suffer, there were eyes to weep,
 But ye have quenched them—there were smiles to steep 1805
 Your hearts in balm, but they are lost in woe;
 And those whom love did set his watch to keep
 Around your tents, truth’s freedom to bestow,
 Ye stabbed as they did sleep—but they forgive ye now.

XI

'Oh wherefore should ill ever flow from ill, 1810
 And pain still keener pain for ever breed?
 We all are brethren—even the slaves who kill
 For hire, are men; and to avenge misdeed
 On the misdoer, doth but Misery feed
 With her own broken heart! O Earth, O Heaven! 1815
 And thou, dread Nature, which to every deed
 And all that lives or is, to be hath given,
 Even as to thee have these done ill, and are forgiven!

XII

'Join then your hands and hearts, and let the past 1820
 Be as a grave which gives not up its dead
 To evil thoughts.'—A film then overcast
 My sense with dimness, for the wound, which bled
 Freshly, swift shadows o'er mine eyes had shed.
 When I awoke, I lay mid friends and foes,
 And earnest countenances on me shed 1825
 The light of questioning looks, whilst one did close
 My wound with balmiest herbs, and soothed me to repose;

XIII

And one whose spear had pierced me, leaned beside,
 With quivering lips and humid eyes;—and all 1830
 Seemed like some brothers on a journey wide
 Gone forth, whom now strange meeting did befall
 In a strange land, round one whom they might call
 Their friend, their chief, their father, for assay
 Of peril, which had saved them from the thrall
 Of death, now suffering. Thus the vast array 1835
 Of those fraternal bands were reconciled that day.

XIV

Lifting the thunder of their acclamation,
 Towards the City then the multitude,
 And I among them, went in joy—a nation 1840
 Made free by love;—a mighty brotherhood
 Linked by a jealous interchange of good;
 A glorious pageant, more magnificent
 Than kingly slaves arrayed in gold and blood,
 When they return from carnage, and are sent
 In triumph bright beneath the populous battlement. 1845

XV

Afar, the city-walls were thronged on high,
 And myriads on each giddy turret clung,
 And to each spire far lessening in the sky
 Bright pennons on the idle winds were hung;
 As we approached, a shout of joyance sprung 1850

At once from all the crowd, as if the vast
 And peopled Earth its boundless skies among
 The sudden clamour of delight had cast,
 When from before its face some general wreck had passed.

XVI

Our armies through the City's hundred gates 1855
 Were poured, like brooks which to the rocky lair
 Of some deep lake, whose silence them awaits,
 Throng from the mountains when the storms are there
 And, as we passed through the calm sunny air
 A thousand flower-inwoven crowns were shed, 1860
 The token flowers of truth and freedom fair,
 And fairest hands bound them on many a head,
 Those angels of love's heaven, that over all was spread.

XVII

I trod as one tranced in some rapturous vision:
 Those bloody bands so lately reconciled, 1865
 Were, ever as they went, by the contrition
 Of anger turned to love, from ill beguiled,
 And every one on them more gently smiled,
 Because they had done evil:—the sweet awe
 Of such mild looks made their own hearts grow mild 1870
 And did with soft attraction ever draw
 Their spirits to the love of freedom's equal law.

XVIII

And they, and all, in one loud symphony
 My name with Liberty commingling, lifted,
 'The friend and the preserver of the free! 1875
 The parent of this joy!' and fair eyes gifted
 With feelings, caught from one who had uplifted
 The light of a great spirit, round me shone;
 And all the shapes of this grand scenery shifted
 Like restless clouds before the steadfast sun,— 1880
 Where was that Maid? I asked, but it was known of none.

XIX

Laone was the name her love had chosen,
 For she was nameless, and her birth none knew:
 Where was Laone now?—The words were frozen
 Within my lips with fear; but to subdue 1885
 Such dreadful hope, to my great task was due,
 And when at length one brought reply, that she
 To-morrow would appear, I then withdrew
 To judge what need for that great throng might be,
 For now the stars came thick over the twilight sea. 1890

XX

Yet need was none for rest or food to care,
 Even though that multitude was passing great,
 Since each one for the other did prepare
 All kindly succour—Therefore to the gate
 Of the Imperial House, now desolate, 1895
 I passed, and there was found aghast, alone,
 The fallen Tyrant!—Silently he sate
 Upon the footstool of his golden throne,
 Which, starred with sunny gems, in its own lustre shone.

XXI

Alone, but for one child, who led before him 1900
 A graceful dance: the only living thing
 Of all the crowd, which thither to adore him
 Flocked yesterday, who solace sought to bring
 In his abandonment!—She knew the King
 Had praised her dance of yore, and now she wove 1905
 Its circles, aye weeping and murmuring
 Mid her sad task of unregarded love,
 That to no smiles it might his speechless sadness move.

XXII

She fled to him, and wildly clasped his feet
 When human steps were heard:—he moved nor spoke, 1910
 Nor changed his hue, nor raised his looks to meet
 The gaze of strangers—our loud entrance woke
 The echoes of the hall, which circling broke
 The calm of its recesses,—like a tomb
 Its sculptured walls vacantly to the stroke 1915
 Of footfalls answered, and the twilight's gloom
 Lay like a charnel's mist within the radiant dome.

XXIII

The little child stood up when we came nigh;
 Her lips and cheeks seemed very pale and wan,
 But on her forehead, and within her eye 1920
 Lay beauty, which makes hearts that feed thereon
 Sick with excess of sweetness; on the throne
 She leaned;—the King, with gathered brow, and lips
 Wreathed by long scorn, did inly sneer and frown
 With hue like that when some great painter dips 1925
 His pencil in the gloom of earthquake and eclipse.

XXIV

She stood beside him like a rainbow braided
 Within some storm, when scarce its shadows vast
 From the blue paths of the swift sun have faded;
 A sweet and solemn smile, like Cythna's, cast 1930
 One moment's light, which made my heart beat fast,

O'er that child's parted lips—a gleam of bliss,
 A shade of vanished days,—as the tears passed
 Which wrapped it, even as with a father's kiss
 I pressed those softest eyes in trembling tenderness.

1935

XXV

The sceptred wretch then from that solitude
 I drew, and, of his change compassionate,
 With words of sadness soothed his rugged mood.
 But he, while pride and fear held deep debate,
 With sullen guile of ill-dissembled hate
 Glared on me as a toothless snake might glare:
 Pity, not scorn I felt, though desolate
 The desolator now, and unaware
 The curses which he mocked had caught him by the hair.

1940

XXVI

I led him forth from that which now might seem
 A gorgeous grave: through portals sculptured deep
 With imagery beautiful as dream
 We went, and left the shades which tend on sleep
 Over its unregarded gold to keep
 Their silent watch.—The child trod faintingly,
 And as she went, the tears which she did weep
 Glanced in the starlight; wildered seemèd she,
 And when I spake, for sobs she could not answer me.

1945

1950

XXVII

At last the tyrant cried, 'She hungers, slave,
 Stab her, or give her bread!'—It was a tone
 Such as sick fancies in a new-made grave
 Might hear. I trembled, for the truth was known;
 He with this child had thus been left alone,
 And neither had gone forth for food,—but he
 In mingled pride and awe cowered near his throne,
 And she a nursling of captivity
 Knew nought beyond those walls, nor what such change might be.

1955

1960

XXVIII

And he was troubled at a charm withdrawn
 Thus suddenly; that sceptres ruled no more—
 That even from gold the dreadful strength was gone,
 Which once made all things subject to its power—
 Such wonder seized him, as if hour by hour
 The past had come again; and the swift fall
 Of one so great and terrible of yore,
 To desolateness, in the hearts of all
 Like wonder stirred, who saw such awful change befall.

1965

1970

XXIX

A mighty crowd, such as the wide land pours
 Once in a thousand years, now gathered round
 The fallen tyrant ;—like the rush of showers
 Of hail in spring, pattering along the ground, 1975
 Their many footsteps fell, else came no sound
 From the wide multitude: that lonely man
 Then knew the burden of his change, and found,
 Concealing in the dust his visage wan,
 Refuge from the keen looks which through his bosom ran. 1980

XXX

And he was faint withal: I sate beside him
 Upon the earth, and took that child so fair
 From his weak arms, that ill might none betide him
 Or her ;—when food was brought to them, her share
 To his averted lips the child did bear, 1985
 But, when she saw he had enough, she ate
 And wept the while ;—the lonely man's despair
 Hunger then overcame, and of his state
 Forgetful, on the dust as in a trance he sate.

XXXI

Slowly the silence of the multitudes 1990
 Passed, as when far is heard in some lone dell
 The gathering of a wind among the woods—
 'And he is fallen!' they cry, 'he who did dwell
 Like famine or the plague, or aught more fell
 Among our homes, is fallen! the murderer 1995
 Who slaked his thirsting soul as from a well
 Of blood and tears with ruin! he is here!
 Sunk in a gulf of scorn from which none may him rear!'

XXXII

Then was heard—'He who judged let him be brought
 To judgement! blood for blood cries from the soil 2000
 On which his crimes have deep pollution wrought!
 Shall Othman only unavenged despoil?
 Shall they who by the stress of grinding toil
 Wrest from the unwilling earth his luxuries,
 Perish for crime, while his foul blood may boil, 2005
 Or creep within his veins at will?—Arise!
 And to high justice make her chosen sacrifice.'

XXXIII

'What do ye seek? what fear ye,' then I cried,
 Suddenly starting forth, 'that ye should shed
 The blood of Othman?—if your hearts are tried 2010
 In the true love of freedom, cease to dread
 This one poor lonely man—beneath Heaven spread

In purest light above us all, through earth
 Maternal earth, who doth her sweet smiles shed
 For all, let him go free; until the worth
 Of human nature win from these a second birth. 2015

XXXIV

'What call ye *justice*? Is there one who ne'er
 In secret thought has wished another's ill?—
 Are ye all pure? Let those stand forth who hear,
 And tremble not. Shall they insult and kill, 2020
 If such they be? their mild eyes can they fill
 With the false anger of the hypocrite?
 Alas, such were not pure,—the chastened will
 Of virtue sees that justice is the light
 Of love, and not revenge, and terror and despite.' 2025

XXXV

The murmur of the people, slowly dying,
 Paused as I spake, then those who near me were,
 Cast gentle looks where the lone man was lying
 Shrouding his head, which now that infant fair
 Clasped on her lap in silence;—through the air 2030
 Sobs were then heard, and many kissed my feet
 In pity's madness, and to the despair
 Of him whom late they cursed, a solace sweet
 His very victims brought—soft looks and speeches meet.

XXXVI

Then to a home for his repose assigned, 2035
 Accompanied by the still throng he went
 In silence, where, to soothe his rankling mind,
 Some likeness of his ancient state was lent;
 And if his heart could have been innocent
 As those who pardoned him, he might have ended 2040
 His days in peace; but his straight lips were bent,
 Men said, into a smile which guile portended,
 A sight with which that child like hope with fear was blended.

XXXVII

'Twas midnight now, the eve of that great day
 Whereon the many nations at whose call 2045
 The chains of earth like mist melted away,
 Decreed to hold a sacred Festival,
 A rite to attest the equality of all
 Who live. So to their homes, to dream or wake
 All went. The sleepless silence did recall 2050
 Laone to my thoughts, with hopes that make
 The flood recede from which their thirst they seek to slake.

XXXVIII

The dawn flowed forth, and from its purple fountains
 I drank those hopes which make the spirit quail,
 As to the plain between the misty mountains 2055
 And the great City, with a countenance pale
 I went:—it was a sight which might avail
 To make men weep exulting tears, for whom
 Now first from human power the reverend veil
 Was torn, to see Earth from her general womb 2060
 Pour forth her swarming sons to a fraternal doom:

XXXIX

To see, far glancing in the misty morning,
 The signs of that innumerable host,
 To hear one sound of many made, the warning
 Of Earth to Heaven from its free children tossed, 2065
 While the eternal hills, and the sea lost
 In wavering light, and, starring the blue sky
 The city's myriad spires of gold, almost
 With human joy made mute society—
 Its witnesses with men who must hereafter be. 2070

XL

To see, like some vast island from the Ocean,
 The Altar of the Federation rear
 Its pile i' the midst; a work, which the devotion
 Of millions in one night created there,
 Sudden, as when the moonrise makes appear 2075
 Strange clouds in the east; a marble pyramid
 Distinct with steps: that mighty shape did wear
 The light of genius; its still shadow hid
 Far ships: to know its height the morning mists forbid!

XLI

To hear the restless multitudes for ever 2080
 Around the base of that great Altar flow,
 As on some mountain-islet burst and shiver
 Atlantic waves; and solemnly and slow
 As the wind bore that tumult to and fro,
 To feel the dreamlike music, which did swim 2085
 Like beams through floating clouds on waves below
 Falling in pauses, from that Altar dim
 As silver-sounding tongues breathed an æreal hymn.

XLII

To hear, to see, to live, was on that morn
 Lethean joy! so that all those assembled 2090
 Cast off their memories of the past outworn;
 Two only bosoms with their own life trembled,
 And mine was one,—and we had both dissembled;

So with a beating heart I went, and one,
 Who having much, covets yet more, resembled;
 A lost and dear possession, which not won,
 He walks in lonely gloom beneath the noonday sun. 2095

XLIII

To the great Pyramid I came: its stair
 With female choirs was thronged: the loveliest
 Among the free, grouped with its sculptures rare; 2100
 As I approached, the morning's golden mist,
 Which now the wonder-stricken breezes kissed
 With their cold lips, fled, and the summit shone
 Like Athos seen from Samothracia, dressed
 In earliest light, by vintagers, and one 2105
 Sate there, a female Shape upon an ivory throne:

XLIV

A Form most like the imagined habitant
 Of silver exhalations sprung from dawn,
 By winds which feed on sunrise woven, to enchant
 The faiths of men: all mortal eyes were drawn, 2110
 As famished mariners through strange seas gone
 Gaze on a burning watch-tower, by the light
 Of those divinest lineaments—alone
 With thoughts which none could share, from that fair sight
 I turned in sickness, for a veil shrouded her countenance bright.

XLV

And, neither did I hear the acclamations, 2116
 Which from brief silence bursting, filled the air
 With her strange name and mine, from all the nations
 Which we, they said, in strength had gathered there
 From the sleep of bondage; nor the vision fair 2120
 Of that bright pageantry beheld,—but blind
 And silent, as a breathing corpse did fare,
 Leaning upon my friend, till like a wind
 To fevered cheeks, a voice flowed o'er my troubled mind.

XLVI

Like music of some minstrel heavenly-gifted, 2125
 To one whom fiends enthral, this voice to me;
 Scarce did I wish her veil to be uplifted,
 I was so calm and joyous.—I could see
 The platform where we stood, the statues three
 Which kept their marble watch on that high shrine, 2130
 The multitudes, the mountains, and the sea;
 As when eclipse hath passed, things sudden shine
 To men's astonished eyes most clear and crystalline.

XLVII

At first Laone spoke most tremulously:

But soon her voice the calmness which it shed
Gathered, and—'Thou art whom I sought to see,

2135

And thou art our first votary here,' she said:

'I had a dear friend once, but he is dead!—

And of all those on the wide earth who breathe,

Thou dost resemble him alone—I spread

2140

This veil between us two, that thou beneath

Shouldst image one who may have been long lost in death.

XLVIII

'For this wilt thou not henceforth pardon me?

Yes, but those joys which silence well requite
Forbid reply;—why men have chosen me

2145

To be the Priestess of this holiest rite

I scarcely know, but that the floods of light
Which flow over the world, have borne me hither

To meet thee, long most dear; and now unite

Thine hand with mine, and may all comfort wither

2150

From both the hearts whose pulse in joy now beat together,

XLIX

'If our own will as others' law we bind,

If the foul worship trampled here we fear;

If as ourselves we cease to love our kind!—

She paused, and pointed upwards—sculptured there

2155

Three shapes around her ivory throne appear;

One was a Giant, like a child asleep

On a loose rock, whose grasp crushed, as it were

In dream, sceptres and crowns; and one did keep

Its watchful eyes in doubt whether to smile or weep;

2160

L

A Woman sitting on the sculptured disk

Of the broad earth, and feeding from one breast

A human babe and a young basilisk;

Her looks were sweet as Heaven's when loveliest

In Autumn eves. The third Image was dressed

2165

In white wings swift as clouds in winter skies;

Beneath his feet, 'mongst ghastliest forms, repressed

Lay Faith, an obscene worm, who sought to rise,

While calmly on the Sun he turned his diamond eyes.

LI

Beside that Image then I sate, while she

2170

Stood, mid the throngs which ever ebbed and flowed,

Like light amid the shadows of the sea

Cast from one cloudless star, and on the crowd

That touch which none who feels forgets, bestowed;

And whilst the sun returned the steadfast gaze
 Of the great Image, as o'er Heaven it glode,
 That rite had place; it ceased when sunset's blaze
 Burned o'er the isles. All stood in joy and deep amaze—
 —When in the silence of all spirits there
 Laone's voice was felt, and through the air
 Her thrilling gestures spoke, most eloquently fair:—

I

'Calm art thou as yon sunset! swift and strong
 As new-fledged Eagles, beautiful and young,
 That float among the blinding beams of morning;
 And underneath thy feet writhe Faith, and Folly,
 Custom, and Hell, and mortal Melancholy—
 Hark! the Earth starts to hear the mighty warning
 Of thy voice sublime and holy;
 Its free spirits here assembled,
 See thee, feel thee, know thee now,—
 To thy voice their hearts have trembled
 Like ten thousand clouds which flow
 With one wide wind as it flies!—
 Wisdom! thy irresistible children rise
 To hail thee, and the elements they chain
 And their own will, to swell the glory of thy train.

2

'O Spirit vast and deep as Night and Heaven!
 Mother and soul of all to which is given
 The light of life, the loveliness of being,
 Lo! thou dost re-ascend the human heart,
 Thy throne of power, almighty as thou wert
 In dreams of Poets old grown pale by seeing
 The shade of thee:—now, millions start
 To feel thy lightnings through them burning:
 Nature, or God, or Love, or Pleasure,
 Or Sympathy the sad tears turning
 To mutual smiles, a drainless treasure,
 Descends amidst us;—Scorn, and Hate,
 Revenge and Selfishness are desolate—
 A hundred nations swear that there shall be
 Pity and Peace and Love, among the good and free!

3

'Eldest of things, divine Equality!
 Wisdom and Love are but the slaves of thee,
 The Angels of thy sway, who pour around thee
 Treasures from all the cells of human thought,
 And from the Stars, and from the Ocean brought,
 And the last living heart whose beatings bound thee:
 The powerful and the wise had sought

Thy coming, thou in light descending
 O'er the wide land which is thine own 2220
 Like the Spring whose breath is blending
 All blasts of fragrance into one,
 Comest upon the paths of men!—
 Earth bares her general bosom to thy ken,
 And all her children here in glory meet 2225
 To feed upon thy smiles, and clasp thy sacred feet.

4

'My brethren, we are free! the plains and mountains,
 The gray sea-shore, the forests and the fountains,
 Are haunts of happiest dwellers;—man and woman,
 Their common bondage burst, may freely borrow 2230
 From lawless love a solace for their sorrow;
 For oft we still must weep, since we are human.
 A stormy night's serenest morrow,
 Whose showers are pity's gentle tears,
 Whose clouds are smiles of those that die 2235
 Like infants without hopes or fears,
 And whose beams are joys that lie
 In blended hearts, now holds dominion;
 The dawn of mind, which upwards on a pinion
 Borne, swift as sunrise, far illumines space, 2240
 And clasps this barren world in its own bright embrace!

5

'My brethren, we are free! The fruits are glowing
 Beneath the stars, and the night winds are flowing
 O'er the ripe corn, the birds and beasts are dreaming—
 Never again may blood of bird or beast 2245
 Stain with its venomous stream a human feast,
 To the pure skies in accusation steaming;
 Avenging poisons shall have ceased
 To feed disease and fear and madness,
 The dwellers of the earth and air 2250
 Shall throng around our steps in gladness
 Seeking their food or refuge there.
 Our toil from thought all glorious forms shall cull,
 To make this Earth, our home, more beautiful,
 And Science, and her sister Poesy, 2255
 Shall clothe in light the fields and cities of the free!

6

'Victory, Victory to the prostrate nations!
 Bear witness Night, and ye mute Constellations
 Who gaze on us from your crystalline cars!
 Thoughts have gone forth whose powers can sleep no more!
 Victory! Victory! Earth's remotest shore, 2260
 Regions which groan beneath the Antarctic stars,
 The green lands cradled in the roar

Of western waves, and wildernesses
 Peopled and vast, which skirt the oceans 2265
 Where morning dyes her golden tresses,
 Shall soon partake our high emotions:
 Kings shall turn pale! Almighty Fear
 The Fiend-God, when our charmed name he hear,
 Shall fade like shadow from his thousand fanes, 2270
 While Truth with Joy enthroned o'er his lost empire reigns!'

LII

Ere she had ceased, the mists of night entwining
 Their dim woof, floated o'er the infinite throng;
 She, like a spirit through the darkness shining,
 In tones whose sweetness silence did prolong, 2275
 As if to lingering winds they did belong,
 Poured forth her inmost soul: a passionate speech
 With wild and thrilling pauses woven among,
 Which whoso heard, was mute, for it could teach
 To rapture like her own all listening hearts to reach. 2280

LIII

Her voice was as a mountain-stream which sweeps
 The withered leaves of Autumn to the lake,
 And in some deep and narrow bay then sleeps
 In the shadow of the shores; as dead leaves wake
 Under the wave, in flowers and herbs which make 2285
 Those green depths beautiful when skies are blue,
 The multitude so moveless did partake
 Such living change, and kindling murmurs flew
 As o'er that speechless calm delight and wonder grew.

LIV

Over the plain the throngs were scattered then 2290
 In groups around the fires, which from the sea
 Even to the gorge of the first mountain-glen
 Blazed wide and far: the banquet of the free
 Was spread beneath many a dark cypress-tree,
 Beneath whose spires, which swayed in the red flame, 2295
 Reclining, as they ate, of Liberty,
 And Hope, and Justice, and Laone's name,
 Earth's children did a woof of happy converse frame.

LV

Their feast was such as Earth, the general mother,
 Pours from her fairest bosom, when she smiles 2300
 In the embrace of Autumn;—to each other
 As when some parent fondly reconciles
 Her warring children, she their wrath beguiles

With her own sustenance ; they relenting weep :
 Such was this Festival, which from their isles 2305
 And continents, and winds, and oceans deep,
 All shapes might throng to share, that fly, or walk, or creep,—

LVI

Might share in peace and innocence, for gore
 Or poison none this festal did pollute,
 But piled on high, an overflowing store 2310
 Of pomegranates, and citrons, fairest fruit,
 Melons, and dates, and figs, and many a root
 Sweet and sustaining, and bright grapes ere yet
 Accursed fire their mild juice could transmute
 Into a mortal bane, and brown corn set 2315
 In baskets ; with pure streams their thirsting lips they wet.

LVII

Laone had descended from the shrine,
 And every deepest look and holiest mind
 Fed on her form, though now those tones divine
 Were silent as she passed ; she did unwind 2320
 Her veil, as with the crowds of her own kind
 She mixed ; some impulse made my heart refrain
 From seeking her that night, so I reclined
 Amidst a group, where on the utmost plain
 A festal watchfire burned beside the dusky main. 2325

LVIII

And joyous was our feast ; pathetic talk,
 And wit, and harmony of choral strains,
 While far Orion o'er the waves did walk
 That flow among the isles, held us in chains
 Of sweet captivity, which none disdains 2330
 Who feels : but when his zone grew dim in mist
 Which clothes the Ocean's bosom, o'er the plains
 The multitudes went homeward, to their rest,
 Which that delightful day with its own shadow blessed.

CANTO VI

I

BESIDE the dimness of the glimmering sea, 2335
 Weaving swift language from impassioned themes,
 With that dear friend I lingered, who to me
 So late had been restored, beneath the gleams
 Of the silver stars ; and ever in soft dreams
 Of future love and peace sweet converse lapped 2340
 Our willing fancies, till the pallid beams
 Of the last watchfire fell, and darkness wrapped
 The waves, and each bright chain of floating fire was snapped ;

II

And till we came even to the City's wall

And the great gate; then, none knew whence or why,
Disquiet on the multitudes did fall: 2345

And first, one pale and breathless passed us by,

And stared and spoke not;—then with piercing cry

A troop of wild-eyed women, by the shrieks
Of their own terror driven,—tumultuously 2350

Hither and thither hurrying with pale cheeks,

Each one from fear unknown a sudden refuge seeks—

III

Then, rallying cries of treason and of danger

Resounded: and—'They come! to arms! to arms!

The Tyrant is amongst us, and the stranger
Comes to enslave us in his name! to arms!' 2355

In vain: for Panic, the pale fiend who charms

Strength to forswear her right, those millions swept

Like waves before the tempest—these alarms

Came to me, as to know their cause I leapt 2360

On the gate's turret, and in rage and grief and scorn I wept!

IV

For to the North I saw the town on fire,

And its red light made morning pallid now,

Which burst over wide Asia;—louder, higher,
The yells of victory and the screams of woe 2365

I heard approach, and saw the throng below

Stream through the gates like foam-wrought waterfalls

Fed from a thousand storms—the fearful glow

Of bombs flares overhead—at intervals

The red artillery's bolt mangling among them falls. 2370

V

And now the horsemen come—and all was done

Swifter than I have spoken—I beheld

Their red swords flash in the unrisen sun.

I rushed among the rout, to have repelled

That miserable flight—one moment quelled 2375

By voice and looks and eloquent despair,

As if reproach from their own hearts withheld

Their steps, they stood; but soon came pouring there

New multitudes, and did those rallied bands o'erbear.

VI

I strove, as, drifted on some cataract

By irresistible streams, some wretch might strive 2380

Who hears its fatal roar:—the files compact

Whelmed me, and from the gate availed to drive

With quickening impulse, as each bolt did rive

Their ranks with bloodier chasm:—into the plain 2385
 Disgorged at length the dead and the alive
 In one dread mass, were parted, and the stain
 Of blood, from mortal steel fell o'er the fields like rain.

VII

For now the despot's bloodhounds with their prey
 Unarmed and unaware, were gorging deep 2390
 Their gluttony of death; the loose array
 Of horsemen o'er the wide fields murdering sweep,
 And with loud laughter for their tyrant reap
 A harvest sown with other hopes, the while,
 Far overhead, ships from Propontis keep 2395
 A killing rain of fire:—when the waves smile
 As sudden earthquakes light many a volcano-isle.

VIII

Thus sudden, unexpected feast was spread
 For the carrion-fowls of Heaven.—I saw the sight—
 I moved—I lived—as o'er the heaps of dead, 2400
 Whose stony eyes glared in the morning light
 I trod;—to me there came no thought of flight,
 But with loud cries of scorn which whoso heard
 That dreaded death, felt in his veins the might
 Of virtuous shame return, the crowd I stirred, 2405
 And desperation's hope in many hearts recurred.

IX

A band of brothers gathering round me, made,
 Although unarmed, a steadfast front, and still
 Retreating, with stern looks beneath the shade
 Of gathered eyebrows, did the victors fill 2410
 With doubt even in success; deliberate will
 Inspired our growing troop, not overthrown
 It gained the shelter of a grassy hill,
 And ever still our comrades were hewn down,
 And their defenceless limbs beneath our footsteps strown. 2415

X

Immovably we stood—in joy I found,
 Beside me then, firm as a giant pine
 Among the mountain-vapours driven around,
 The old man whom I loved—his eyes divine
 With a mild look of courage answered mine, 2420
 And my young friend was near, and ardently
 His hand grasped mine a moment—now the line
 Of war extended, to our rallying cry
 As myriads flocked in love and brotherhood to die.

XI

For ever while the sun was climbing Heaven
 The horseman hewed our unarmed myriads down 2425
 Safely, though when by thirst of carnage driven
 Too near, those slaves were swiftly overthrown
 By hundreds leaping on them:—flesh and bone
 Soon made our ghastly ramparts; then the shaft 2430
 Of the artillery from the sea was thrown
 More fast and fiery, and the conquerors laughed
 In pride to hear the wind our screams of torment waft.

XII

For on one-side alone the hill gave shelter,
 So vast that phalanx of unconquered men, 2435
 And there the living in the blood did welter
 Of the dead and dying, which, in that green glen,
 Like stifled torrents, made a plashy fen
 Under the feet—thus was the butchery waged
 While the sun clomb Heaven's eastern steep—but when 2440
 It 'gan to sink—a fiercer combat raged,
 For in more doubtful strife the armies were engaged.

XIII

Within a cave upon the hill were found
 A bundle of rude pikes, the instrument
 Of those who war but on their native ground 2445
 For natural rights: a shout of joyance sent
 Even from our hearts the wide air pierced and rent,
 As those few arms the bravest and the best
 Seized, and each sixth, thus armed, did now present
 A line which covered and sustained the rest, 2450
 A confident phalanx, which the foe on every side invest.

XIV

That onset turned the foes to flight almost;
 But soon they saw their present strength, and knew
 That coming night would to our resolute host
 Bring victory; so dismounting, close they drew 2455
 Their glittering files, and then the combat grew
 Unequal but most horrible;—and ever
 Our myriads, whom the swift bolt overthrew,
 Or the red sword, failed like a mountain-river
 Which rushes forth in foam to sink in sands for ever. 2460

XV

Sorrow and shame, to see with their own kind
 Our human brethren mix, like beasts of blood,
 To mutual ruin armed by one behind
 Who sits and scoffs!—That friend so mild and good,
 Who like its shadow near my youth had stood, 2465

Was stabbed!—my old preserver's hoary hair
 With the flesh clinging to its roots, was strewed
 Under my feet!—I lost all sense or care,
 And like the rest I grew desperate and unaware.

XVI

The battle became ghastlier—in the midst 2470
 I paused, and saw, how ugly and how fell
 O Hate! thou art, even when thy life thou shedd'st
 For love. The ground in many a little dell
 Was broken, up and down whose steeps befell
 Alternate victory and defeat, and there 2475
 The combatants with rage most horrible
 Strove, and their eyes started with cracking stare,
 And impotent their tongues they lolled into the air,

XVII

Flaccid and foamy, like a mad dog's hanging;
 Want, and Moon-madness, and the pest's swift Bane 2480
 When its shafts smite—while yet its bow is twanging—
 Have each their mark and sign—some ghastly stain;
 And this was thine, O War! of hate and pain
 Thou loathèd slave. I saw all shapes of death
 And ministered to many, o'er the plain 2485
 While carnage in the sunbeam's warmth did seethe,
 Till twilight o'er the east wove her serenest wreath.

XVIII

The few who yet survived, resolute and firm
 Around me fought. At the decline of day
 Winding above the mountain's snowy term 2490
 New banners shone: they quivered in the ray
 Of the sun's unseen orb—ere night the array
 Of fresh troops hemmed us in—of those brave bands
 I soon survived alone—and now I lay
 Vanquished and faint, the grasp of bloody hands 2495
 I felt, and saw on high the glare of falling brands:

XIX

When on my foes a sudden terror came,
 And they fled, scattering—lo! with reinless speed
 A black Tartarian horse of giant frame
 Comes trampling over the dead, the living bleed 2500
 Beneath the hoofs of that tremendous steed,
 On which, like to an Angel, robed in white,
 Sate one waving a sword;—the hosts recede
 And fly, as through their ranks with awful might,
 Sweeps in the shadow of eve that Phantom swift and bright; 2505

XX

And its path made a solitude.—I rose
 And marked its coming: it relaxed its course
 As it approached me, and the wind that flows
 Through night, bore accents to mine ear whose force
 Might create smiles in death—the Tartar horse 2510
 Paused, and I saw the shape its might which swayed,
 And heard her musical pants, like the sweet source
 Of waters in the desert, as she said,
 ‘Mount with me Laon, now!’—I rapidly obeyed.

XXI

Then: ‘Away! away!’ she cried, and stretched her sword 2515
 As ’twere a scourge over the courser’s head,
 And lightly shook the reins.—We spake no word,
 But like the vapour of the tempest fled
 Over the plain; her dark hair was dispread
 Like the pine’s locks upon the lingering blast; 2520
 Over mine eyes its shadowy strings it spread
 Fitfully, and the hills and streams fled fast,
 As o’er their glimmering forms the steed’s broad shadow passed.

XXII

And his hoofs ground the rocks to fire and dust,
 His strong sides made the torrents rise in spray, 2525
 And turbulence, as of a whirlwind’s gust
 Surrounded us;—and still away! away!
 Through the desert night we sped, while she alway
 Gazed on a mountain which we neared, whose crest,
 Crowned with a marble ruin, in the ray 2530
 Of the obscure stars gleamed;—its rugged breast
 The steed strained up, and then his impulse did arrest.

XXIII

A rocky hill which overhung the Ocean:—
 From that lone ruin, when the steed that panted
 Paused, might be heard the murmur of the motion 2535
 Of waters, as in spots for ever haunted
 By the choicest winds of Heaven, which are enchanted
 To music, by the wand of Solitude,
 That wizard wild, and the far tents implanted
 Upon the plain, be seen by those who stood 2540
 Thence marking the dark shore of Ocean’s curvèd flood.

XXIV

One moment these were heard and seen—another
 Passed; and the two who stood beneath that night,
 Each only heard, or saw, or felt the other;
 As from the lofty steed she did alight, 2545
 Cythna, (for, from the eyes whose deepest light

Of love and sadness made my lips feel pale
 With influence strange of mournfullest delight,
 My own sweet Cythna looked), with joy did quail,
 And felt her strength in tears of human weakness fail. 2550

XXV

And for a space in my embrace she rested,
 Her head on my unquiet heart reposing,
 While my faint arms her languid frame invested:
 At length she looked on me, and half unclosing
 Her tremulous lips, said: 'Friend, thy bands were losing 2555
 The battle, as I stood before the King
 In bonds.—I burst them then, and swiftly choosing
 The time, did seize a Tartar's sword, and spring
 Upon his horse, and, swift as on the whirlwind's wing,

XXVI

'Have thou and I been borne beyond pursuer, 2560
 And we are here.'—Then turning to the steed,
 She pressed the white moon on his front with pure
 And rose-like lips, and many a fragrant weed
 From the green ruin plucked, that he might feed;—
 But I to a stone seat that Maiden led, 2565
 And kissing her fair eyes, said, 'Thou hast need
 Of rest,' and I heaped up the courser's bed
 In a green mossy nook, with mountain-flowers disspread.

XXVII

Within that ruin, where a shattered portal
 Looks to the eastern stars, abandoned now 2570
 By man, to be the home of things immortal,
 Memories, like awful ghosts which come and go,
 And must inherit all he builds below,
 When he is gone, a hall stood; o'er whose roof
 Fair clinging weeds with ivy pale did grow, 2575
 Claspings its gray rents with a verdurous woof,
 A hanging dome of leaves, a canopy moon-proof.

XXVIII

The autumnal winds, as if spell-bound, had made
 A natural couch of leaves in that recess,
 Which seasons none disturbed, but, in the shade 2580
 Of flowering parasites, did Spring love to dress
 With their sweet blooms the wintry loneliness
 Of those dead leaves, shedding their stars, whene'er
 The wandering wind her nurslings might caress;
 Whose intertwining fingers ever there 2585
 Made music wild and soft that filled the listening air.

XXIX

We know not where we go, or what sweet dream
 May pilot us through caverns strange and fair
 Of far and pathless passion, while the stream
 Of life, our bark doth on its whirlpools bear, 2590
 Spreading swift wings as sails to the dim air;
 Nor should we seek to know, so the devotion
 Of love and gentle thoughts be heard still there
 Louder and louder from the utmost Ocean
 Of universal life, attuning its commotion. 2595

XXX

To the pure all things are pure! Oblivion wrapped
 Our spirits, and the fearful overthrow
 Of public hope was from our being snapped,
 Though linkèd years had bound it there; for now 2600
 A power, a thirst, a knowledge, which below
 All thoughts, like light beyond the atmosphere,
 Clothing its clouds with grace, doth ever flow,
 Came on us, as we sate in silence there,
 Beneath the golden stars of the clear azure air:—

XXXI

In silence which doth follow talk that causes 2605
 The baffled heart to speak with sighs and tears,
 When wildering passion swalloweth up the pauses
 Of inexpressive speech:—the youthful years
 Which we together passed, their hopes and fears,
 The blood itself which ran within our frames, 2610
 That likeness of the features which endears
 The thoughts expressed by them, our very names,
 And all the wingèd hours which speechless memory claims,

XXXII

Had found a voice—and ere that voice did pass,
 The night grew damp and dim, and through a rent 2615
 Of the ruin where we sate, from the morass,
 A wandering Meteor by some wild wind sent,
 Hung high in the green dome, to which it lent
 A faint and pallid lustre; while the song
 Of blasts, in which its blue hair quivering bent, 2620
 Strewed strangest sounds the moving leaves among;
 A wondrous light, the sound as of a spirit's tongue.

XXXIII

The Meteor showed the leaves on which we sate,
 And Cythna's glowing arms, and the thick ties 2625
 Of her soft hair, which bent with gathered weight
 My neck near hers, her dark and deepening eyes,
 Which, as twin phantoms of one star that lies

O'er a dim well, move, though the star reposes,
 Swam in our mute and liquid ecstasies,
 Her marble brow, and eager lips, like roses, 2630
 With their own fragrance pale, which Spring but half uncloses.

XXXIV

The Meteor to its far morass returned:
 The beating of our veins one interval
 Made still; and then I felt the blood that burned 2635
 Within her frame, mingle with mine, and fall
 Around my heart like fire; and over all
 A mist was spread, the sickness of a deep
 And speechless swoon of joy, as might befall
 Two disunited spirits when they leap
 In union from this earth's obscure and fading sleep. 2640

XXXV

Was it one moment that confounded thus
 All thought, all sense, all feeling, into one
 Unutterable power, which shielded us
 Even from our own cold looks, when we had gone 2645
 Into a wide and wild oblivion
 Of tumult and of tenderness? or now
 Had ages, such as make the moon and sun,
 The seasons, and mankind their changes know,
 Left fear and time unfelt by us alone below?

XXXVI

I know not. What are kisses whose fire clasps 2650
 The failing heart in languishment, or limb
 Twined within limb? or the quick dying gasps
 Of the life meeting, when the faint eyes swim
 Through tears of a wide mist boundless and dim,
 In one caress? What is the strong control 2655
 Which leads the heart that dizzy steep to climb,
 Where far over the world those vapours roll,
 Which blend two restless frames in one reposing soul?

XXXVII

It is the shadow which doth float unseen,
 But not unfelt, o'er blind mortality, 2660
 Whose divine darkness fled not, from that green
 And lone recess, where lapped in peace did lie
 Our linkèd frames till, from the changing sky,
 That night and still another day had fled;
 And then I saw and felt. The moon was high, 2665
 And clouds, as of a coming storm, were spread
 Under its orb,—loud winds were gathering overhead.

XXXVIII

Cythna's sweet lips seemed lurid in the moon,
 Her fairest limbs with the night wind were chill,
 And her dark tresses were all loosely strewn 2670
 O'er her pale bosom:—all within was still,
 And the sweet peace of joy did almost fill
 The depth of her unfathomable look;—
 And we sate calmly, though that rocky hill,
 The waves contending in its caverns strook, 2675
 For they foreknew the storm, and the gray ruin shook.

XXXIX

There we unheeding sate, in the communion
 Of interchangèd vows, which, with a rite
 Of faith most sweet and sacred, stamped our union.—
 Few were the living hearts which could unite 2680
 Like ours, or celebrate a bridal-night
 With such close sympathies, for they had sprung
 From linkèd youth, and from the gentle might
 Of earliest love, delayed and cherished long,
 Which common hopes and fears made, like a tempest, strong. 2685

XL

And such is Nature's law divine, that those
 Who grow together cannot choose but love,
 If faith or custom do not interpose,
 Or common slavery mar what else might move
 All gentlest thoughts; as in the sacred grove 2690
 Which shades the springs of Ethiopian Nile,
 That living tree, which, if the arrowy dove
 Strike with her shadow, shrinks in fear awhile,
 But its own kindred leaves clasps while the sunbeams smile;

XLI

And clings to them, when darkness may dis sever 2695
 The close caresses of all duller plants
 Which bloom on the wide earth—thus we for ever
 Were linked, for love had nursed us in the haunts
 Where knowledge, from its secret source enchants
 Young hearts with the fresh music of its springing, 2700
 Ere yet its gathered flood feeds human wants,
 As the great Nile feeds Egypt; ever flinging
 Light on the woven boughs which o'er its waves are swinging.

XLII

The tones of Cythna's voice like echoes were
 Of those far murmuring streams; they rose and fell, 2705
 Mixed with mine own in the tempestuous air,—
 And so we sate, until our talk befell
 Of the late ruin, swift and horrible,

And how those seeds of hope might yet be sown,
 Whose fruit is evil's mortal poison: well,
 For us, this ruin made a watch-tower lone,
 But Cythna's eyes looked faint, and now two days were gone

2710

XLIII

Since she had food:—therefore I did awaken
 The Tartar steed, who, from his ebon mane
 Soon as the clinging slumbers he had shaken,
 Bent his thin head to seek the brazen rein,
 Following me obediently; with pain
 Of heart, so deep and dread, that one caress,
 When lips and heart refuse to part again
 Till they have told their fill, could scarce express
 The anguish of her mute and fearful tenderness,

2715

2720

XLIV

Cythna beheld me part, as I bestrode
 That willing steed—the tempest and the night,
 Which gave my path its safety as I rode
 Down the ravine of rocks, did soon unite
 The darkness and the tumult of their might
 Borne on all winds.—Far through the streaming rain
 Floating at intervals the garments white
 Of Cythna gleamed, and her voice once again
 Came to me on the gust, and soon I reached the plain.

2725

2730

XLV

I dreaded not the tempest, nor did he
 Who bore me, but his eyeballs wide and red
 Turned on the lightning's cleft exultingly;
 And when the earth beneath his tameless tread,
 Shook with the sullen thunder, he would spread
 His nostrils to the blast, and joyously
 Mock the fierce peal with neighings;—thus we sped
 O'er the lit plain, and soon I could descry
 Where Death and Fire had gorged the spoil of victory.

2735

XLVI

There was a desolate village in a wood
 Whose bloom-inwoven leaves now scattering fed
 The hungry storm; it was a place of blood,
 A heap of hearthless walls;—the flames were dead
 Within those dwellings now,—the life had fled
 From all those corpses now,—but the wide sky
 Flooded with lightning was ribbed overhead
 By the black rafters, and around did lie
 Women, and babes, and men, slaughtered confusedly.

2740

2745

XLVII

Beside the fountain in the market-place
 Dismounting, I beheld those corpses stare 2750
 With horny eyes upon each other's face,
 And on the earth and on the vacant air,
 And upon me, close to the waters where
 I stooped to slake my thirst;—I shrank to taste,
 For the salt bitterness of blood was there; 2755
 But tied the steed beside, and sought in haste
 If any yet survived amid that ghastly waste.

XLVIII

No living thing was there beside one woman,
 Whom I found wandering in the streets, and she
 Was withered from a likeness of aught human 2760
 Into a fiend, by some strange misery:
 Soon as she heard my steps she leaped on me,
 And glued her burning lips to mine, and laughed
 With a loud, long, and frantic laugh of glee,
 And cried, 'Now, Mortal, thou hast deeply quaffed 2765
 The Plague's blue kisses—soon millions shall pledge the draught!

XLIX

'My name is Pestilence—this bosom dry,
 Once fed two babes—a sister and a brother—
 When I came home, one in the blood did lie
 Of three death-wounds—the flames had ate the other! 2770
 Since then I have no longer been a mother,
 But I am Pestilence;—hither and thither
 I flit about, that I may slay and smother:—
 All lips which I have kissed must surely wither,
 But Death's—if thou art he, we'll go to work together! 2775

L

'What seek'st thou here? The moonlight comes in flashes,—
 The dew is rising dankly from the dell—
 'Twill moisten her! and thou shalt see the gashes
 In my sweet boy, now full of worms—but tell
 First what thou seek'st.'—'I seek for food.'—'Tis well, 2780
 Thou shalt have food; Famine, my paramour,
 Waits for us at the feast—cruel and fell
 Is Famine, but he drives not from his door
 Those whom these lips have kissed, alone. No more, no more!'

LI

As thus she spake, she grasped me with the strength 2785
 Of madness, and by many a ruined hearth
 She led, and over many a corpse:—at length
 We came to a lone hut where on the earth
 Which made its floor, she in her ghastly mirth

Gathering from all those homes now desolate, 2790
 Had piled three heaps of loaves, making a dearth
 Among the dead—round which she set in state
 A ring of cold, stiff babes; silent and stark they sate.

LII

She leaped upon a pile, and lifted high
 Her mad looks to the lightning, and cried: 'Eat! 2795
 Share the great feast—to-morrow we must die!'
 And then she spurned the loaves with her pale feet,
 Towards her bloodless guests;—that sight to meet,
 Mine eyes and my heart ached, and but that she
 Who loved me, did with absent looks defeat 2800
 Despair, I might have raved in sympathy;
 But now I took the food that woman offered me;

LIII

And vainly having with her madness striven
 If I might win her to return with me,
 Departed. In the eastern beams of Heaven 2805
 The lightning now grew pallid—rapidly,
 As by the shore of the tempestuous sea
 The dark steed bore me, and the mountain gray
 Soon echoed to his hoofs, and I could see
 Cythna among the rocks, where she alway 2810
 Had sate, with anxious eyes fixed on the lingering day.

LIV

And joy was ours to meet: she was most pale,
 Famished, and wet and weary, so I cast
 My arms around her, lest her steps should fail
 As to our home we went, and thus embraced, 2815
 Her full heart seemed a deeper joy to taste
 Than e'er the prosperous know; the steed behind
 Trod peacefully along the mountain waste:
 We reached our home ere morning could unbind
 Night's latest veil, and on our bridal-couch reclined. 2820

LV

Her chilled heart having cherished in my bosom,
 And sweetest kisses past, we two did share
 Our peaceful meal:—as an autumnal blossom
 Which spreads its shrunk leaves in the sunny air,
 After cold showers, like rainbows woven there, 2825
 Thus in her lips and cheeks the vital spirit
 Mantled, and in her eyes, an atmosphere
 Of health, and hope; and sorrow languished near it,
 And fear, and all that dark despondence doth inherit.

CANTO VII

I

So we sate joyous as the morning ray 2830
 Which fed upon the wrecks of night and storm
 Now lingering on the winds; light airs did play
 Among the dewy weeds, the sun was warm,
 And we sate linked in the inwoven charm
 Of converse and caresses sweet and deep, 2835
 Speechless caresses, talk that might disarm
 Time, though he wield the darts of death and sleep,
 And those thrice mortal barbs in his own poison steep.

II

I told her of my sufferings and my madness,
 And how, awakened from that dreamy mood 2840
 By Liberty's uprise, the strength of gladness
 Came to my spirit in my solitude;
 And all that now I was—while tears pursued
 Each other down her fair and listening cheek
 Fast as the thoughts which fed them, like a flood 2845
 From sunbright dales; and when I ceased to speak,
 Her accents soft and sweet the pausing air did wake.

III

She told me a strange tale of strange endurance,
 Like broken memories of many a heart
 Woven into one; to which no firm assurance, 2850
 So wild were they, could her own faith impart.
 She said that not a tear did dare to start
 From the swoln brain, and that her thoughts were firm
 When from all mortal hope she did depart,
 Borne by those slaves across the Ocean's term, 2855
 And that she reached the port without one fear infirm.

IV

One was she among many there, the thralls
 Of the cold Tyrant's cruel lust: and they
 Laughed mournfully in those polluted halls;
 But she was calm and sad, musing alway 2860
 On loftiest enterprise, till on a day
 The Tyrant heard her singing to her lute
 A wild, and sad, and spirit-thrilling lay,
 Like winds that die in wastes—one moment mute
 The evil thoughts it made, which did his breast pollute. 2865

V

Even when he saw her wondrous loveliness,
 One moment to great Nature's sacred power
 He bent, and was no longer passionless;
 But when he bade her to his secret bower
 Be borne, a loveless victim, and she tore 2870

Her locks in agony, and her words of flame
 And mightier looks availed not; then he bore
 Again his load of slavery, and became
 A king, a heartless beast, a pageant and a name.

VI

She told me what a loathsome agony 2875
 Is that when selfishness mocks love's delight,
 Foul as in dream's most fearful imagery
 To dally with the mowing dead—that night
 All torture, fear, or horror made seem light
 Which the soul dreams or knows, and when the day 2880
 Shone on her awful frenzy, from the sight
 Where like a Spirit in fleshly chains she lay
 Struggling, aghast and pale the Tyrant fled away.

VII

Her madness was a beam of light, a power
 Which dawned through the rent soul; and words it gave, 2885
 Gestures, and looks, such as in whirlwinds bore
 Which might not be withstood—whence none could save—
 All who approached their sphere,—like some calm wave
 Vexed into whirlpools by the chasms beneath;
 And sympathy made each attendant slave 2890
 Fearless and free, and they began to breathe
 Deep curses, like the voice of flames far underneath.

VIII

The King felt pale upon his noonday throne:
 At night two slaves he to her chamber sent,—
 One was a green and wrinkled eunuch, grown 2895
 From human shape into an instrument
 Of all things ill—distorted, bowed and bent.
 The other was a wretch from infancy
 Made dumb by poison; who nought knew or meant
 But to obey: from the fire-isles came he, 2900
 A diver lean and strong, of Oman's coral sea.

IX

They bore her to a bark, and the swift stroke
 Of silent rowers clove the blue moonlight seas,
 Until upon their path the morning broke;
 They anchored then, where, be there calm or breeze, 2905
 The gloomiest of the drear Symplegades
 Shakes with the sleepless surge;—the Ethiop there
 Wound his long arms around her, and with knees
 Like iron clasped her feet, and plunged with her
 Among the closing waves out of the boundless air. 2910

X

'Swift as an eagle stooping from the plain
 Of morning light, into some shadowy wood,
 He plunged through the green silence of the main,
 Through many a cavern which the eternal flood
 Had scooped, as dark lairs for its monster brood; 2915
 And among mighty shapes which fled in wonder,
 And among mightier shadows which pursued
 His heels, he wound: until the dark rocks under
 He touched a golden chain—a sound arose like thunder.

XI

'A stunning clang of massive bolts redoubling 2920
 Beneath the deep—a burst of waters driven
 As from the roots of the sea, raging and bubbling:
 And in that roof of crags a space was riven
 Through which there shone the emerald beams of heaven,
 Shot through the lines of many waves inwoven, 2925
 Like sunlight through acacia woods at even,
 Through which, his way the diver having cloven,
 Passed like a spark sent up out of a burning oven.

XII

'And then,' she said, 'he laid me in a cave
 Above the waters, by that chasm of sea, 2930
 A fountain round and vast, in which the wave
 Imprisoned, boiled and leaped perpetually,
 Down which, one moment resting, he did flee,
 Winning the adverse depth; that spacious cell
 Like an hupaithric temple wide and high, 2935
 Whose aëry dome is inaccessible,
 Was pierced with one round cleft through which the sunbeams fell.

XIII

'Below, the fountain's brink was richly paven
 With the deep's wealth, coral, and pearl, and sand
 Like spangling gold, and purple shells engraven 2940
 With mystic legends by no mortal hand,
 Left there, when thronging to the moon's command,
 The gathering waves rent the Hesperian gate
 Of mountains, and on such bright floor did stand
 Columns, and shapes like statues, and the state 2945
 Of kingless thrones, which Earth did in her heart create.

XIV

'The fiend of madness which had made its prey
 Of my poor heart, was lulled to sleep awhile:
 There was an interval of many a day,
 And a sea-eagle brought me food the while, 2950
 Whose nest was built in that untrodden isle,

And who, to be the gaoler had been taught
 Of that strange dungeon ; as a friend whose smile
 Like light and rest at morn and even is sought
 That wild bird was to me, till madness misery brought. 2955

XV

'The misery of a madness slow and creeping,
 Which made the earth seem fire, the sea seem air,
 And the white clouds of noon which oft were sleeping,
 In the blue heaven so beautiful and fair,
 Like hosts of ghastly shadows hovering there ; 2960
 And the sea-eagle looked a fiend, who bore
 Thy mangled limbs for food!—Thus all things were
 Transformed into the agony which I wore
 Even as a poisoned robe around my bosom's core.

XVI

'Again I knew the day and night fast fleeing, 2965
 The eagle, and the fountain, and the air ;
 Another frenzy came—there seemed a being
 Within me—a strange load my heart did bear,
 As if some living thing had made its lair
 Even in the fountains of my life:—a long 2970
 And wondrous vision wrought from my despair,
 Then grew, like sweet reality among
 Dim visionary woes, an unrepousing throng.

XVII

'Methought I was about to be a mother—
 Month after month went by, and still I dreamed 2975
 That we should soon be all to one another,
 I and my child ; and still new pulses seemed
 To beat beside my heart, and still I deemed
 There was a babe within—and, when the rain
 Of winter through the rifted cavern streamed, 2980
 Methought, after a lapse of lingering pain,
 I saw that lovely shape, which near my heart had lain.

XVIII

'It was a babe, beautiful from its birth,—
 It was like thee, dear love, its eyes were thine,
 Its brow, its lips, and so upon the earth 2985
 It laid its fingers, as now rest on mine
 Thine own, beloved!—'twas a dream divine ;
 Even to remember how it fled, how swift,
 How utterly, might make the heart repine,—
 Though 'twas a dream.'—Then Cythna did uplift 2990
 Her looks on mine, as if some doubt she sought to shift :

XIX

A doubt which would not flee, a tenderness
 Of questioning grief, a source of thronging tears:
 Which having passed, as one whom sobs oppress
 She spoke: 'Yes, in the wilderness of years 2995
 Her memory, aye, like a green home appears;
 She sucked her fill even at this breast, sweet love,
 For many months. I had no mortal fears;
 Methought I felt her lips and breath approve,—
 It was a human thing which to my bosom clove. 3000

XX

'I watched the dawn of her first smiles, and soon
 When zenith-stars were trembling on the wave,
 Or when the beams of the invisible moon,
 Or sun, from many a prism within the cave
 Their gem-born shadows to the water gave, 3005
 Her looks would hunt them, and with outspread hand,
 From the swift lights which might that fountain pave,
 She would mark one, and laugh, when that command
 Slighting, it lingered there, and could not understand.

XXI

'Methought her looks began to talk with me;
 And no articulate sounds, but something sweet
 Her lips would frame,—so sweet it could not be,
 That it was meaningless; her touch would meet
 Mine, and our pulses calmly flow and beat
 In response while we slept; and on a day 3015
 When I was happiest in that strange retreat,
 With heaps of golden shells we two did play,—
 Both infants, weaving wings for time's perpetual way. 3010

XXII

'Ere night, methought, her waning eyes were grown
 Weary with joy, and tired with our delight, 3020
 We, on the earth, like sister twins lay down
 On one fair mother's bosom:—from that night
 She fled;—like those illusions clear and bright,
 Which dwell in lakes, when the red moon on high
 Pause ere it wakens tempest;—and her flight, 3025
 Though 'twas the death of brainless fantasy,
 Yet smote my lonesome heart more than all misery.

XXIII

'It seemed that in the dreary night, the diver
 Who brought me thither, came again, and bore
 My child away. I saw the waters quiver, 3030
 When he so swiftly sunk, as once before:
 Then morning came—it shone even as of yore,

But I was changed—the very life was gone
 Out of my heart—I wasted more and more,
 Day after day, and sitting there alone, 3035
 Vexed the inconstant waves with my perpetual moan.

XXIV

‘I was no longer mad, and yet methought
 My breasts were swoln and changed:—in every vein
 The blood stood still one moment, while that thought
 Was passing—with a gush of sickening pain 3040
 It ebbd even to its withered springs again:
 When my wan eyes in stern resolve I turned
 From that most strange delusion, which would fain
 Have waked the dream for which my spirit yearned
 With more than human love,—then left it unreturned. 3045

XXV

‘So now my reason was restored to me
 I struggled with that dream, which, like a beast
 Most fierce and beauteous, in my memory
 Had made its lair, and on my heart did feast;
 But all that cave and all its shapes, possessed 3050
 By thoughts which could not fade, renewed each one
 Some smile, some look, some gesture which had blessed
 Me heretofore: I, sitting there alone,
 Vexed the inconstant waves with my perpetual moan.

XXVI

‘Time passed, I know not whether months or years; 3055
 For day, nor night, nor change of seasons made
 Its note, but thoughts and unavailing tears:
 And I became at last even as a shade,
 A smoke, a cloud on which the winds have preyed,
 Till it be thin as air; until, one even, 3060
 A Nautilus upon the fountain played,
 Spreading his azure sail where breath of Heaven
 Descended not, among the waves and whirlpools driven.

XXVII

‘And, when the Eagle came, that lovely thing,
 Oaring with rosy feet its silver boat, 3065
 Fled near me as for shelter; on slow wing,
 The Eagle, hovering o’er his prey did float;
 But when he saw that I with fear did note
 His purpose, proffering my own food to him,
 The eager plumes subsided on his throat— 3070
 He came where that bright child of sea did swim,
 And o’er it cast in peace his shadow broad and dim.

XXVIII

'This wakened me, it gave me human strength;
 And hope, I know not whence or wherefore, rose,
 But I resumed my ancient powers at length;
 My spirit felt again like one of those 3075
 Like thine, whose fate it is to make the woes
 Of humankind their prey—what was this cave?
 Its deep foundation no firm purpose knows
 Immutable, resistless, strong to save, 3080
 Like mind while yet it mocks the all-devouring grave.

XXIX

'And where was Laon? might my heart be dead,
 While that far dearer heart could move and be?
 Or whilst over the earth the pall was spread,
 Which I had sworn to rend? I might be free, 3085
 Could I but win that friendly bird to me,
 To bring me ropes; and long in vain I sought
 By intercourse of mutual imagery
 Of objects, if such aid he could be taught;
 But fruit, and flowers, and boughs, yet never ropes he brought.

XXX

'We live in our own world, and mine was made 3091
 From glorious fantasies of hope departed:
 Aye we are darkened with their floating shade,
 Or cast a lustre on them—time imparted
 Such power to me—I became fearless-hearted, 3095
 My eye and voice grew firm, calm was my mind,
 And piercing, like the morn, now it has darted
 Its lustre on all hidden things, behind
 Yon dim and fading clouds which load the weary wind.

XXXI

'My mind became the book through which I grew 3100
 Wise in all human wisdom, and its cave,
 Which like a mine I rifled through and through,
 To me the keeping of its secrets gave—
 One mind, the type of all, the moveless wave
 Whose calm reflects all moving things that are, 3105
 Necessity, and love, and life, the grave,
 And sympathy, fountains of hope and fear;
 Justice, and truth, and time, and the world's natural sphere.

XXXII

'And on the sand would I make signs to range 3110
 These woofs, as they were woven, of my thought;
 Clear, elemental shapes, whose smallest change
 A subtler language within language wrought:
 The key of truths which once were dimly taught

In old Crotona ;—and sweet melodies
 Of love, in that lorn solitude I caught 3115
 From mine own voice in dream, when thy dear eyes
 Shone through my sleep, and did that utterance harmonize.

XXXIII

'Thy songs were winds whereon I fled at will,
 As in a wingèd chariot, o'er the plain
 Of crystal youth ; and thou wert there to fill 3120
 My heart with joy, and there we sate again
 On the gray margin of the glimmering main,
 Happy as then but wiser far, for we
 Smiled on the flowery grave in which were lain
 Fear, Faith, and Slavery ; and mankind was free, 3125
 Equal, and pure, and wise, in Wisdom's prophecy.

XXXIV

'For to my will my fancies were as slaves
 To do their sweet and subtile ministries ;
 And oft from that bright fountain's shadowy waves
 They would make human throngs gather and rise 3130
 To combat with my overflowing eyes,
 And voice made deep with passion—thus I grew
 Familiar with the shock and the surprise
 And war of earthly minds, from which I drew
 The power which has been mine to frame their thoughts anew.

XXXV

'And thus my prison was the populous earth— 3136
 Where I saw—even as misery dreams of morn
 Before the east has given its glory birth—
 Religion's pomp made desolate by the scorn
 Of Wisdom's faintest smile, and thrones uptorn, 3140
 And dwellings of mild people interspersed
 With undivided fields of ripening corn,
 And love made free,—a hope which we have nursed
 Even with our blood and tears,—until its glory burst.

XXXVI

'All is not lost ! There is some recompense 3145
 For hope whose fountain can be thus profound,
 Even thronèd Evil's splendid impotence,
 Girt by its hell of power, the secret sound
 Of hymns to truth and freedom—the dread bound
 Of life and death passed fearlessly and well, 3150
 Dungeons wherein the high resolve is found,
 Racks which degraded woman's greatness tell,
 And what may else be good and irresistible.

XXXVII

'Such are the thoughts which, like the fires that flare
 In storm-encompassed isles, we cherish yet 3155
 In this dark ruin—such were mine even there;
 As in its sleep some odorous violet,
 While yet its leaves with nightly dews are wet,
 Breathes in prophetic dreams of day's uprise,
 Or, as ere Scythian frost in fear has met 3160
 Spring's messengers descending from the skies,
 The buds foreknow their life—this hope must ever rise.

XXXVIII

'So years had passed, when sudden earthquake rent
 The depth of ocean, and the cavern cracked
 With sound, as if the world's wide continent 3165
 Had fallen in universal ruin wracked:
 And through the cleft streamed in one cataract
 The stifling waters—when I woke, the flood
 Whose banded waves that crystal cave had sacked
 Was ebbing round me, and my bright abode 3170
 Before me yawned—a chasm desert, and bare, and broad.

XXXIX

'Above me was the sky, beneath the sea:
 I stood upon a point of shattered stone,
 And heard loose rocks rushing tumultuously
 With splash and shock into the deep—anon 3175
 All ceased, and there was silence wide and lone.
 I felt that I was free! The Ocean-spray
 Quivered beneath my feet, the broad Heaven shone
 Around, and in my hair the winds did play
 Lingering as they pursued their unimpeded way. 3180

XL

'My spirit moved upon the sea like wind
 Which round some thymy cape will lag and hover,
 Though it can wake the still cloud, and unbind
 The strength of tempest: day was almost over,
 When through the fading light I could discover 3185
 A ship approaching—its white sails were fed
 With the north wind—its moving shade did cover
 The twilight deep;—the Mariners in dread
 Cast anchor when they saw new rocks around them spread.

XLI

'And when they saw one sitting on a crag, 3190
 They sent a boat to me;—the Sailors rowed
 In awe through many a new and fearful jag
 Of overhanging rock, through which there flowed
 The foam of streams that cannot make abode.

They came and questioned me, but when they heard
 My voice, they became silent, and they stood
 And moved as men in whom new love had stirred
 Deep thoughts: so to the ship we passed without a word. 3195

CANTO VIII

I

'I SATE beside the Steersman then, and gazing
 Upon the west, cried, "Spread the sails! Behold!" 3200
 The sinking moon is like a watch-tower blazing
 Over the mountains yet;—the City of Gold
 Yon Cape alone does from the sight withhold;
 The stream is fleet—the north breathes steadily
 Beneath the stars, they tremble with the cold! 3205
 Ye cannot rest upon the dreary sea!—
 Haste, haste to the warm home of happier destiny!"

II

'The Mariners obeyed—the Captain stood
 Aloof, and, whispering to the Pilot, said,
 "Alas, alas! I fear we are pursued 3210
 By wicked ghosts: a Phantom of the Dead,
 The night before we sailed, came to my bed
 In dream, like that!" The Pilot then replied,
 "It cannot be—she is a human Maid—
 Her low voice makes you weep—she is some bride, 3215
 Or daughter of high birth—she can be nought beside."

III

'We passed the islets, borne by wind and stream,
 And as we sailed, the Mariners came near
 And thronged around to listen;—in the gleam
 Of the pale moon I stood, as one whom fear 3220
 May not attain, and my calm voice did rear;
 "Ye all are human—yon broad moon gives light
 To millions who the selfsame likeness wear,
 Even while I speak—beneath this very night,
 Their thoughts flow on like ours, in sadness or delight. 3225

IV

"What dream ye? Your own hands have built an home,
 Even for yourselves on a beloved shore:
 For some, fond eyes are pining till they come,
 How they will greet him when his toils are o'er,
 And laughing babes rush from the well-known door! 3230
 Is this your care? ye toil for your own good—
 Ye feel and think—has some immortal power
 Such purposes? or in a human mood,
 Dream ye some Power thus builds for man in solitude?

V

““What is that Power? Ye mock yourselves, and give 3235
 A human heart to what ye cannot know:
 As if the cause of life could think and live!
 ’Twere as if man’s own works should feel, and show
 The hopes, and fears, and thoughts from which they flow,
 And he be like to them! Lo! Plague is free 3240
 To waste, Blight, Poison, Earthquake, Hail, and Snow,
 Disease, and Want, and worse Necessity
 Of hate and ill, and Pride, and Fear, and Tyranny!

VI

““What is that Power? Some moon-struck sophist stood
 Watching the shade from his own soul upthrown 3245
 Fill Heaven and darken Earth, and in such mood
 The Form he saw and worshipped was his own,
 His likeness in the world’s vast mirror shown;
 And ’twere an innocent dream, but that a faith
 Nursed by fear’s dew of poison, grows thereon, 3250
 And that men say, that Power has chosen Death
 On all who scorn its laws, to wreak immortal wrath.

VII

““Men say that they themselves have heard and seen,
 Or known from others who have known such things,
 A Shade, a Form, which Earth and Heaven between 3255
 Wields an invisible rod—that Priests and Kings,
 Custom, domestic sway, ay, all that brings
 Man’s freeborn soul beneath the oppressor’s heel,
 Are his strong ministers, and that the stings
 Of death will make the wise his vengeance feel, 3260
 Though truth and virtue arm their hearts with tenfold steel.

VIII

““And it is said, this Power will punish wrong;
 Yes, add despair to crime, and pain to pain!
 And deepest hell, and deathless snakes among,
 Will bind the wretch on whom is fixed a stain, 3265
 Which, like a plague, a burden, and a bane,
 Clung to him while he lived;—for love and hate,
 Virtue and vice, they say are difference vain—
 The will of strength is right—this human state
 Tyrants, that they may rule, with lies thus desolate. 3270

IX

““Alas, what strength? Opinion is more frail
 Than yon dim cloud now fading on the moon
 Even while we gaze, though it awhile avail
 To hide the orb of truth—and every throne
 Of Earth or Heaven, though shadow, rests thereon, 3275

One shape of many names:—for this ye plough
 The barren waves of ocean, hence each one
 Is slave or tyrant; all betray and bow,
 Command, or kill, or fear, or wreak, or suffer woe.

X

“Its names are each a sign which maketh holy 3280
 All power—ay, the ghost, the dream, the shade
 Of power—lust, falsehood, hate, and pride, and folly;
 The pattern whence all fraud and wrong is made,
 A law to which mankind has been betrayed;
 And human love, is as the name well known 3285
 Of a dear mother, whom the murderer laid
 In bloody grave, and into darkness thrown,
 Gathered her wildered babes around him as his own.

XI

“O Love, who to the hearts of wandering men
 Art as the calm to Ocean’s weary waves! 3290
 Justice, or Truth, or Joy! those only can
 From slavery and religion’s labyrinth caves
 Guide us, as one clear star the seaman saves.
 To give to all an equal share of good,
 To track the steps of Freedom, though through graves 3295
 She pass, to suffer all in patient mood,
 To weep for crime, though stained with thy friend’s dearest blood,-

XII

“To feel the peace of self-contentment’s lot,
 To own all sympathies, and outrage none,
 And in the inmost bowers of sense and thought, 3300
 Until life’s sunny day is quite gone down,
 To sit and smile with Joy, or, not alone,
 To kiss salt tears from the worn cheek of Woe;
 To live, as if to love and live were one,—
 This is not faith or law, nor those who bow 3305
 To thrones on Heaven or Earth, such destiny may know.

XIII

“But children near their parents tremble now,
 Because they must obey—one rules another,
 And as one Power rules both high and low,
 So man is made the captive of his brother, 3310
 And Hate is throned on high with Fear her mother,
 Above the Highest—and those fountain-cells,
 Whence love yet flowed when faith had choked all other,
 Are darkened—Woman as the bond-slave dwells
 Of man, a slave; and life is poisoned in its wells. 3315

XIV

"Man seeks for gold in mines, that he may weave
 A lasting chain for his own slavery;—
 In fear and restless care that he may live
 He toils for others, who must ever be
 The joyless thralls of like captivity; 3320
 He murders, for his chiefs delight in ruin;
 He builds the altar, that its idol's fee
 May be his very blood; he is pursuing—
 O, blind and willing wretch!—his own obscure undoing.

XV

"Woman!—she is his slave, she has become 3325
 A thing I weep to speak—the child of scorn,
 The outcast of a desolated home;
 Falsehood, and fear, and toil, like waves have worn
 Channels upon her cheek, which smiles adorn,
 As calm decks the false Ocean:—well ye know 3330
 What Woman is, for none of Woman born,
 Can choose but drain the bitter dregs of woe,
 Which ever from the oppressed to the oppressors flow.

XVI

"This need not be; ye might arise, and will
 That gold should lose its power, and thrones their glory; 3335
 That love, which none may bind, be free to fill
 The world, like light; and evil faith, grown hoary
 With crime, be quenched and die.—Yon promontory
 Even now eclipses the descending moon!—
 Dungeons and palaces are transitory— 3340
 High temples fade like vapour—Man alone
 Remains, whose will has power when all beside is gone.

XVII

"Let all be free and equal!—From your hearts
 I feel an echo; through my inmost frame
 Like sweetest sound, seeking its mate, it darts— 3345
 Whence come ye, friends? Alas, I cannot name
 All that I read of sorrow, toil, and shame,
 On your worn faces; as in legends old
 Which make immortal the disastrous fame
 Of conquerors and impostors false and bold, 3350
 The discord of your hearts, I in your looks behold.

XVIII

"Whence come ye, friends? from pouring human blood
 Forth on the earth? Or bring ye steel and gold,
 That Kings may dupe and slay the multitude?
 Or from the famished poor, pale, weak, and cold, 3355
 Bear ye the earnings of their toil? Unfold!

Speak! Are your hands in slaughter's sanguine hue
 Stained freshly? have your hearts in guile grown old?
 Know yourselves thus! ye shall be pure as dew,
 And I will be a friend and sister unto you.

3360

XIX

“Disguise it not—we have one human heart—
 All mortal thoughts confess a common home:
 Blush not for what may to thyself impart
 Stains of inevitable crime: the doom
 Is this, which has, or may, or must become
 Thine, and all humankind's. Ye are the spoil
 Which Time thus marks for the devouring tomb,
 Thou and thy thoughts and they, and all the toil
 Wherewith ye twine the rings of life's perpetual coil.

3365

XX

“Disguise it not—ye blush for what ye hate,
 And Enmity is sister unto Shame;
 Look on your mind—it is the book of fate—
 Ah! it is dark with many a blazoned name
 Of misery—all are mirrors of the same;
 But the dark fiend who with his iron pen
 Dipped in scorn's fiery poison, makes his fame
 Enduring there, would o'er the heads of men
 Pass harmless, if they scorned to make their hearts his den.

3370

3375

XXI

“Yes, it is Hate—that shapeless fiendly thing
 Of many names, all evil, some divine,
 Whom self-contempt arms with a mortal sting;
 Which, when the heart its snaky folds entwine
 Is wasted quite, and when it doth repine
 To gorge such bitter prey, on all beside
 It turns with ninefold rage, as with its twine
 When Amphisbæna some fair bird has tied,
 Soon o'er the putrid mass he threats on every side.

3380

3385

XXII

“Reproach not thine own soul, but know thyself,
 Nor hate another's crime, nor loathe thine own.
 It is the dark idolatry of self,
 Which, when our thoughts and actions once are gone,
 Demands that man should weep, and bleed, and groan;
 O vacant expiation! Be at rest.—
 The past is Death's, the future is thine own;
 And love and joy can make the foulest breast
 A paradise of flowers, where peace might build her nest.

3390

3395

XXIII

““Speak thou! whence come ye?”—A Youth made reply:

“Wearily, wearily o’er the boundless deep

We sail;—thou readest well the misery

Told in these faded eyes, but much doth sleep

3400

Within, which there the poor heart loves to keep,

Or dare not write on the dishonoured brow;

Even from our childhood have we learned to steep

The bread of slavery in the tears of woe,

And never dreamed of hope or refuge until now.

3405

XXIV

““Yes—I must speak—my secret should have perished

Even with the heart it wasted, as a brand

Fades in the dying flame whose life it cherished,

But that no human bosom can withstand

Thee, wondrous Lady, and the mild command

3410

Of thy keen eyes:—yes, we are wretched slaves,

Who from their wonted loves and native land

Are reft, and bear o’er the dividing waves

The unregarded prey of calm and happy graves.

XXV

““We drag afar from pastoral vales the fairest

3415

Among the daughters of those mountains lone,

We drag them there, where all things best and rarest

Are stained and trampled:—years have come and gone

Since, like the ship which bears me, I have known

No thought;—but now the eyes of one dear Maid

3420

On mine with light of mutual love have shone—

She is my life,—I am but as the shade

Of her,—a smoke sent up from ashes, soon to fade.

XXVI

““For she must perish in the Tyrant’s hall—

Alas, alas!”—He ceased, and by the sail

3425

Sate cowering—but his sobs were heard by all,

And still before the ocean and the gale

The ship fled fast till the stars ’gan to fail,

And, round me gathered with mute countenance,

The Seamen gazed, the Pilot, worn and pale

3430

With toil, the Captain with gray locks, whose glance

Met mine in restless awe—they stood as in a trance.

XXVII

““Recede not! pause not now! Thou art grown old,

But Hope will make thee young, for Hope and Youth

Are children of one mother, even Love—behold!

3435

The eternal stars gaze on us!—is the truth

Within your soul? care for your own, or ruth

For others' sufferings? do ye thirst to bear
 A heart which not the serpent Custom's tooth
 May violate?—Be free! and even here, 3449
 Swear to be firm till death!" They cried "We swear! We swear!"

XXVIII

'The very darkness shook, as with a blast
 Of subterranean thunder, at the cry;
 The hollow shore its thousand echoes cast
 Into the night, as if the sea, and sky, 3445
 And earth, rejoiced with new-born liberty,
 For in that name they swore! Bolts were undrawn,
 And on the deck, with unaccustomed eye
 The captives gazing stood, and every one
 Shrank as the inconstant torch upon her countenance shone. 3450

XXIX

'They were earth's purest children, young and fair,
 With eyes the shrines of unawakened thought,
 And brows as bright as Spring or Morning, ere
 Dark time had there its evil legend wrought
 In characters of cloud which wither not. — 3455
 The change was like a dream to them; but soon
 They knew the glory of their altered lot,
 In the bright wisdom of youth's breathless noon,
 Sweet talk, and smiles, and sighs, all bosoms did attune.

XXX

'But one was mute, her cheeks and lips most fair, 3460
 Changing their hue like lilies newly blown,
 Beneath a bright acacia's shadowy hair,
 Waved by the wind amid the sunny noon,
 Showed that her soul was quivering; and full soon
 That Youth arose, and breathlessly did look 3465
 On her and me, as for some speechless boon:
 I smiled, and both their hands in mine I took,
 And felt a soft delight from what their spirits shook.

CANTO IX

I

'THAT night we anchored in a woody bay,
 And sleep no more around us dared to hover 3470
 Than, when all doubt and fear has passed away,
 It shades the couch of some unresting lover,
 Whose heart is now at rest: thus night passed over
 In mutual joy:—around, a forest grew
 Of poplars and dark oaks, whose shade did cover 3475
 The waning stars pranked in the waters blue,
 And trembled in the wind which from the morning flew.

II

'The joyous Mariners, and each free Maiden,
 Now brought from the deep forest many a bough,
 With woodland spoil most innocently laden ; 3480
 Soon wreaths of budding foliage seemed to flow
 Over the mast and sails, the stern and prow
 Were canopied with blooming boughs,—the while
 On the slant sun's path o'er the waves we go
 Rejoicing, like the dwellers of an isle 3485
 Doomed to pursue those waves that cannot cease to smile.

III

'The many ships spotting the dark blue deep
 With snowy sails, fled fast as ours came nigh,
 In fear and wonder ; and on every steep
 Thousands did gaze, they heard the startling cry, 3490
 Like Earth's own voice lifted unconquerably
 To all her children, the unbounded mirth,
 The glorious joy of thy name—Liberty!
 They heard!—As o'er the mountains of the earth
 From peak to peak leap on the beams of Morning's birth : 3495

IV

'So from that cry over the boundless hills
 Sudden was caught one universal sound,
 Like a volcano's voice, whose thunder fills
 Remotest skies,—such glorious madness found
 A path through human hearts with stream which drowned
 Its struggling fears and cares, dark Custom's brood ; 3501
 They knew not whence it came, but felt around
 A wide contagion poured—they called aloud
 On Liberty—that name lived on the sunny flood.

V

'We reached the port.—Alas! from many spirits 3505
 The wisdom which had waked that cry, was fled,
 Like the brief glory which dark Heaven inherits
 From the false dawn, which fades ere it is spread,
 Upon the night's devouring darkness shed:
 Yet soon bright day will burst—even like a chasm 3510
 Of fire, to burn the shrouds outworn and dead,
 Which wrap the world ; a wide enthusiasm,
 To cleanse the fevered world as with an earthquake's spasm!

VI

'I walked through the great City then, but free
 From shame or fear ; those toil-worn Mariners 3515
 And happy Maidens did encompass me ;
 And like a subterranean wind that stirs
 Some forest among caves, the hopes and fears

From every human soul, a murmur strange
 Made as I passed: and many wept, with tears
 Of joy and awe, and winged thoughts did range,
 And half-extinguished words, which prophesied of change. 3520

VII

'For, with strong speech I tore the veil that hid
 Nature, and Truth, and Liberty, and Love,—
 As one who from some mountain's pyramid 3525
 Points to the unrisen sun!—the shades approve
 His truth, and flee from every stream and grove.
 Thus, gentle thoughts did many a bosom fill,—
 Wisdom, the mail of tried affections wove
 For many a heart, and tameless scorn of ill, 3530
 Thrice steeped in molten steel the unconquerable will.

VIII

'Some said I was a maniac wild and lost;
 Some, that I scarce had risen from the grave,
 The Prophet's virgin bride, a heavenly ghost:—
 Some said, I was a fiend from my weird cave, 3535
 Who had stolen human shape, and o'er the wave,
 The forest, and the mountain came;—some said
 I was the child of God, sent down to save
 Women from bonds and death, and on my head
 The burden of their sins would frightfully be laid. 3540

IX

'But soon my human words found sympathy
 In human hearts: the purest and the best,
 As friend with friend, made common cause with me,
 And they were few, but resolute;—the rest,
 Ere yet success the enterprise had blessed, 3545
 Leagued with me in their hearts;—their meals, their slumber,
 Their hourly occupations, were possessed
 By hopes which I had armed to overnumber
 Those hosts of meaner cares, which life's strong wings encumber.

X

'But chiefly women, whom my voice did waken 3550
 From their cold, careless, willing slavery,
 Sought me: one truth their dreary prison has shaken,—
 They looked around, and lo! they became free!
 Their many tyrants sitting desolately
 In slave-deserted halls, could none restrain; 3555
 For wrath's red fire had withered in the eye,
 Whose lightning once was death,—nor fear, nor gain
 Could tempt one captive now to lock another's chain.

XI

'Those who were sent to bind me, wept, and felt
 Their minds outsoar the bonds which clasped them round, 3560
 Even as a waxen shape may waste and melt
 In the white furnace; and a visioned swoond,
 A pause of hope and awe the City bound,
 Which, like the silence of a tempest's birth,
 When in its awful shadow it has wound 3565
 The sun, the wind, the ocean, and the earth,
 Hung terrible, ere yet the lightnings have leaped forth.

XII

'Like clouds inwoven in the silent sky,
 By winds from distant regions meeting there,
 In the high name of truth and liberty, 3570
 Around the City millions gathered were,
 By hopes which sprang from many a hidden lair,—
 Words which the lore of truth in hues of flame
 Arrayed, thine own wild songs which in the air
 Like homeless odours floated, and the name 3575
 Of thee, and many a tongue which thou hadst dipped in flame.

XIII

'The Tyrant knew his power was gone, but Fear,
 The nurse of Vengeance, bade him wait the event—
 That perfidy and custom, gold and prayer,
 And whatsoe'er, when force is impotent, 3580
 To fraud the sceptre of the world has lent,
 Might, as he judged, confirm his failing sway.
 Therefore throughout the streets, the Priests he sent
 To curse the rebels.—To their gods did they
 For Earthquake, Plague, and Want, kneel in the public way. 3585

XIV

'And grave and hoary men were bribed to tell
 From seats where law is made the slave of wrong,
 How glorious Athens in her splendour fell,
 Because her sons were free,—and that among 3590
 Mankind, the many to the few belong,
 By Heaven, and Nature, and Necessity.
 They said, that age was truth, and that the young
 Marred with wild hopes the peace of slavery,
 With which old times and men had quelled the vain and free.

XV

'And with the falsehood of their poisonous lips 3595
 They breathed on the enduring memory
 Of sages and of bards a brief eclipse;
 There was one teacher, who necessity
 Had armed with strength and wrong against mankind,

His slave and his avenger aye to be;
 That we were weak and sinful, frail and blind,
 And that the will of one was peace, and we
 Should seek for nought on earth but toil and misery—

3603

XVI

“For thus we might avoid the hell hereafter.”
 So spake the hypocrites, who cursed and lied;
 Alas, their sway was past, and tears and laughter
 Clung to their hoary hair, withering the pride
 Which in their hollow hearts dared still abide;
 And yet obscener slaves with smoother brow,
 And sneers on their strait lips, thin, blue and wide,
 Said, that the rule of men was over now,
 And hence, the subject world to woman’s will must bow;

3605

3610

XVII

‘And gold was scattered through the streets, and wine
 Flowed at a hundred feasts within the wall.
 In vain! the steady towers in Heaven did shine
 As they were wont, nor at the priestly call
 Left Plague her banquet in the Ethiop’s hall,
 Nor Famine from the rich man’s portal came,
 Where at her ease she ever preys on all
 Who throng to kneel for food: nor fear nor shame,
 Nor faith, nor discord, dimmed hope’s newly kindled flame.

3615

3620

XVIII

‘For gold was as a god whose faith began
 To fade, so that its worshippers were few,
 And Faith itself, which in the heart of man
 Gives shape, voice, name, to spectral Terror, knew
 Its downfall, as the altars lonelier grew,
 Till the Priests stood alone within the fane;
 The shafts of falsehood unpolluting flew,
 And the cold sneers of calumny were vain,
 The union of the free with discord’s brand to stain.

3625

3630

XIX

‘The rest thou knowest.—Lo! we two are here—
 We have survived a ruin wide and deep—
 Strange thoughts are mine.—I cannot grieve or fear,
 Sitting with thee upon this lonely steep
 I smile, though human love should make me weep.
 We have survived a joy that knows no sorrow,
 And I do feel a mighty calmness creep
 Over my heart, which can no longer borrow
 Its hues from chance or change, dark children of to-morrow.

3635

XX

'We know not what will come—yet Laon, dearest,
 Cythna shall be the prophetess of Love,
 Her lips shall rob thee of the grace thou wearest,
 To hide thy heart, and clothe the shapes which rove
 Within the homeless Future's wintry grove;
 For I now, sitting thus beside thee, seem
 Even with thy breath and blood to live and move,
 And violence and wrong are as a dream
 Which rolls from steadfast truth, an unreturning stream.

XXI

'The blasts of Autumn drive the wingèd seeds
 Over the earth,—next come the snows, and rain,
 And frosts, and storms, which dreary Winter leads
 Out of his Scythian cave, a savage train;
 Behold! Spring sweeps over the world again,
 Shedding soft dews from her ethereal wings;
 Flowers on the mountains, fruits over the plain,
 And music on the waves and woods she flings,
 And love on all that lives, and calm on lifeless things.

XXII

'O Spring, of hope, and love, and youth, and gladness
 Wind-wingèd emblem! brightest, best and fairest!
 Whence comest thou, when, with dark Winter's sadness
 The tears that fade in sunny smiles thou sharest?
 Sister of joy, thou art the child who wearest
 Thy mother's dying smile, tender and sweet;
 Thy mother Autumn, for whose grave thou bearest
 Fresh flowers, and beams like flowers, with gentle feet,
 Disturbing not the leaves which are her winding-sheet.

XXIII

'Virtue, and Hope, and Love, like light and Heaven,
 Surround the world.—We are their chosen slaves.
 Has not the whirlwind of our spirit driven
 Truth's deathless germs to thought's remotest caves?
 Lo, Winter comes!—the grief of many graves,
 The frost of death, the tempest of the sword,
 The flood of tyranny, whose sanguine waves
 Stagnate like ice at Faith the enchanter's word,
 And bind all human hearts in its repose abhorred.

XXIV

'The seeds are sleeping in the soil: meanwhile
 The Tyrant peoples dungeons with his prey,
 Pale victims on the guarded scaffold smile
 Because they cannot speak; and, day by day,
 The moon of wasting Science wanes away

Among her stars, and in that darkness vast
 The sons of earth to their foul idols pray,
 And gray Priests triumph, and like blight or blast
 A shade of selfish care o'er human looks is cast.

XXV

'This is the winter of the world;—and here 3685
 We die, even as the winds of Autumn fade,
 Expiring in the frore and foggy air.—
 Behold! Spring comes, though we must pass, who made
 The promise of its birth,—even as the shade
 Which from our death, as from a mountain, flings 3690
 The future, a broad sunrise; thus arrayed
 As with the plumes of overshadowing wings,
 From its dark gulf of chains, Earth like an eagle springs.

XXVI

'O dearest love! we shall be dead and cold
 Before this morn may on the world arise; 3695
 Wouldst thou the glory of its dawn behold?
 Alas! gaze not on me, but turn thine eyes
 On thine own heart—it is a paradise
 Which everlasting Spring has made its own,
 And while drear Winter fills the naked skies, 3700
 Sweet streams of sunny thought, and flowers fresh-blown,
 Are there, and weave their sounds and odours into one.

XXVII

'In their own hearts the earnest of the hope
 Which made them great, the good will ever find;
 And though some envious shades may interlope 3705
 Between the effect and it, One comes behind,
 Who aye the future to the past will bind—
 Necessity, whose sightless strength for ever
 Evil with evil, good with good must wind
 In bands of union, which no power may sever: 3710
 They must bring forth their kind, and be divided never!

XXVIII

'The good and mighty of departed ages
 Are in their graves, the innocent and free,
 Heroes, and Poets, and prevailing Sages,
 Who leave the vesture of their majesty 3715
 To adorn and clothe this naked world;—and we
 Are like to them—such perish, but they leave
 All hope, or love, or truth, or liberty,
 Whose forms their mighty spirits could conceive,
 To be a rule and law to ages that survive. 3720

XXIX

'So be the turf heaped over our remains
 Even in our happy youth, and that strange lot,
 Whate'er it be, when in these mingling veins
 The blood is still, be ours; let sense and thought
 Pass from our being, or be numbered not 3725
 Among the things that are; let those who come
 Behind, for whom our steadfast will has bought
 A calm inheritance, a glorious doom,
 Insult with careless tread, our undivided tomb.

XXX

'Our many thoughts and deeds, our life and love, 3730
 Our happiness, and all that we have been,
 Immortally must live, and burn and move,
 When we shall be no more;—the world has seen
 A type of peace; and—as some most serene
 And lovely spot to a poor maniac's eye, 3735
 After long years, some sweet and moving scene
 Of youthful hope, returning suddenly,
 Quells his long madness—thus man shall remember thee.

XXXI

'And Calumny meanwhile shall feed on us,
 As worms devour the dead, and near the throne 3740
 And at the altar, most accepted thus
 Shall sneers and curses be;—what we have done
 None shall dare vouch, though it be truly known;
 That record shall remain, when they must pass
 Who built their pride on its oblivion; 3745
 And fame, in human hope which sculptured was,
 Survive the perished scrolls of unenduring brass.

XXXII

'The while we two, belovèd, must depart,
 And Sense and Reason, those enchanters fair,
 Whose wand of power is hope, would bid the heart 3750
 That gazed beyond the wormy grave despair:
 These eyes, these lips, this blood, seems darkly there
 To fade in hideous ruin; no calm sleep
 Peopling with golden dreams the stagnant air,
 Seems our obscure and rotting eyes to steep 3755
 In joy;—but senseless death—a ruin dark and deep!

XXXIII

'These are blind fancies—reason cannot know
 What sense can neither feel, nor thought conceive;
 There is delusion in the world—and woe,
 And fear, and pain—we know not whence we live, 3760
 Or why, or how, or what mute Power may give

Their being to each plant, and star, and beast,
 Or even these thoughts.—Come near me! I do weave
 A chain I cannot break—I am possessed
 With thoughts too swift and strong for one lone human breast. 3775

XXXIV

‘Yes, yes—thy kiss is sweet, thy lips are warm—
 O! willingly, belovèd, would these eyes,
 Might they no more drink being from thy form,
 Even as to sleep whence we again arise,
 Close their faint orbs in death: I fear nor prize 3775
 Aught that can now betide, unshared by thee—
 Yes, Love when Wisdom fails makes Cythna wise:
 Darkness and death, if death be true, must be
 Dearer than life and hope, if unenjoyed with thee.

XXXV

‘Alas, our thoughts flow on with stream, whose waters 3775
 Return not to their fountain—Earth and Heaven,
 The Ocean and the Sun, the Clouds their daughters,
 Winter, and Spring, and Morn, and Noon, and Even,
 All that we are or know, is darkly driven
 Towards one gulf.—Lo! what a change is come 3780
 Since I first spake—but time shall be forgiven,
 Though it change all but thee!’—She ceased—night’s gloom
 Meanwhile had fallen on earth from the sky’s sunless dome.

XXXVI

Though she had ceased, her countenance uplifted
 To Heaven, still spake, with solemn glory bright; 3785
 Her dark deep eyes, her lips, whose motions gifted
 The air they breathed with love, her locks undight.
 ‘Fair star of life and love,’ I cried, ‘my soul’s delight,
 Why lookest thou on the crystalline skies?
 O, that my spirit were yon Heaven of night, 3790
 Which gazes on thee with its thousand eyes!’
 She turned to me and smiled—that smile was Paradise!

CANTO X

I

WAS there a human spirit in the steed,
 That thus with his proud voice, ere night was gone,
 He broke our linkèd rest? or do indeed 3795
 All living things a common nature own,
 And thought erect an universal throne,
 Where many shapes one tribute ever bear?
 And Earth, their mutual mother, does she groan
 To see her sons contend? and makes she bare 3800
 Her breast, that all in peace its drainless stores may share?

II

I have heard friendly sounds from many a tongue
 Which was not human—the lone nightingale
 Has answered me with her most soothing song,
 Out of her ivy bower, when I sate pale 3805
 With grief, and sighed beneath; from many a dale
 The antelopes who flocked for food have spoken
 With happy sounds, and motions, that avail
 Like man's own speech; and such was now the token
 Of waning night, whose calm by that proud neigh was broken. 3810

III

Each night, that mighty steed bore me abroad,
 And I returned with food to our retreat,
 And dark intelligence; the blood which flowed
 Over the fields, had stained the courser's feet;
 Soon the dust drinks that bitter dew,—then meet 3815
 The vulture, and the wild dog, and the snake,
 The wolf, and the hyaena gray, and eat
 The dead in horrid truce: their throngs did make
 Behind the steed, a chasm like waves in a ship's wake.

IV

For, from the utmost realms of earth, came pouring 3820
 The banded slaves whom every despot sent
 At that throned traitor's summons; like the roaring
 Of fire, whose floods the wild deer circumvent
 In the scorched pastures of the South; so bent
 The armies of the leaguèd Kings around 3825
 Their files of steel and flame;—the continent
 Trembled, as with a zone of ruin bound,
 Beneath their feet, the sea shook with their Navies' sound.

V

From every nation of the earth they came,
 The multitude of moving heartless things, 3830
 Whom slaves call men: obediently they came,
 Like sheep whom from the fold the shepherd brings
 To the stall, red with blood; their many kings
 Led them, thus erring, from their native land;
 Tartar and Frank, and millions whom the wings 3835
 Of Indian breezes lull, and many a band
 The Arctic Anarch sent, and Idumea's sand.

VI

Fertile in prodigies and lies;—so there
 Strange natures made a brotherhood of ill.
 The desert savage ceased to grasp in fear 3840
 His Asian shield and bow, when, at the will
 Of Europe's subtler son, the bolt would kill

Some shepherd sitting on a rock secure ;
 But smiles of wondering joy his face would fill,
 And savage sympathy: those slaves impure, 3845
 Each one the other thus from ill to ill did lure.

VII

For traitorously did that foul Tyrant robe
 His countenance in lies,—even at the hour
 When he was snatched from death, then o'er the globe,
 With secret signs from many a mountain-tower, 3850
 With smoke by day, and fire by night, the power
 Of Kings and Priests, those dark conspirators,
 He called:—they knew his cause their own, and swore
 Like wolves and serpents to their mutual wars
 Strange truce, with many a rite which Earth and Heaven abhors. 3855

VIII

Myriads had come—millions were on their way ;
 The Tyrant passed, surrounded by the steel
 Of hired assassins, through the public way,
 Choked with his country's dead:—his footsteps reel
 On the fresh blood—he smiles. 'Ay, now I feel 3860
 I am a King in truth!' he said, and took
 His royal seat, and bade the torturing wheel
 Be brought, and fire, and pincers, and the hook,
 And scorpions; that his soul on its revenge might look.

IX

'But first, go slay the rebels—why return 3865
 The victor bands?' he said, 'millions yet live,
 Of whom the weakest with one word might turn
 The scales of victory yet;—let none survive
 But those within the walls—each fifth shall give
 The expiation for his brethren here.— 3870
 Go forth, and waste and kill!'—'O king, forgive
 My speech,' a soldier answered—'but we fear
 The spirits of the night, and morn is drawing near ;

X

'For we were slaying still without remorse,
 And now that dreadful chief beneath my hand 3875
 Defenceless lay, when, on a hell-black horse,
 An Angel bright as day, waving a brand
 Which flashed among the stars, passed.'—'Dost thou stand
 Parleying with me, thou wretch?' the king replied;
 'Slaves, bind him to the wheel; and of this band, 3880
 Whoso will drag that woman to his side
 That scared him thus, may burn his dearest foe beside ;

XI

'And gold and glory shall be his.—Go forth!'
 They rushed into the plain.—Loud was the roar
 Of their career: the horsemen shook the earth; 3885
 The wheeled artillery's speed the pavement tore;
 The infantry, file after file, did pour
 Their clouds on the utmost hills. Five days they slew
 Among the wasted fields; the sixth saw gore
 Stream through the city; on the seventh, the dew 3890
 Of slaughter became stiff, and there was peace anew:

XII

Peace in the desert fields and villages,
 Between the glutted beasts and mangled dead!
 Peace in the silent streets! save when the cries
 Of victims to their fiery judgement led, 3895
 Made pale their voiceless lips who seemed to dread
 Even in their dearest kindred, lest some tongue
 Be faithless to the fear yet unbetrayed;
 Peace in the Tyrant's palace, where the throng
 Waste the triumphal hours in festival and song! 3900

XIII

Day after day the burning sun rolled on
 Over the death-polluted land—it came
 Out of the east like fire, and fiercely shone
 A lamp of Autumn, ripening with its flame
 The few lone ears of corn;—the sky became 3905
 Stagnate with heat, so that each cloud and blast
 Languished and died,—the thirsting air did claim
 All moisture, and a rotting vapour passed
 From the unburied dead, invisible and fast.

XIV

First Want, then Plague came on the beasts; their food 3910
 Failed, and they drew the breath of its decay.
 Millions on millions, whom the scent of blood
 Had lured, or who, from regions far away,
 Had tracked the hosts in festival array,
 From their dark deserts; gaunt and wasting now, 3915
 Stalked like fell shades among their perished prey;
 In their green eyes a strange disease did glow,
 They sank in hideous spasm, or pains severe and slow.

XV

The fish were poisoned in the streams; the birds
 In the green woods perished; the insect race 3920
 Was withered up; the scattered flocks and herds
 Who had survived the wild beasts' hungry chase
 Died moaning, each upon the other's face

In helpless agony gazing ; round the City
 All night, the lean hyaenas their sad case 3925
 Like starving infants wailed ; a woeful ditty !
 And many a mother wept, pierced with unnatural pity.

XVI

Amid the æreal minarets on high,
 The Ethiopian vultures fluttering fell
 From their long line of brethren in the sky, 3930
 Startling the concourse of mankind.—Too well
 These signs the coming mischief did foretell:—
 Strange panic first, a deep and sickening dread
 Within each heart, like ice, did sink and dwell,
 A voiceless thought of evil, which did spread 3935
 With the quick glance of eyes, like withering lightnings shed.

XVII

Day after day, when the year wanes, the frosts
 Strip its green crown of leaves, till all is bare ;
 So on those strange and congregated hosts
 Came Famine, a swift shadow, and the air 3940
 Groaned with the burden of a new despair ;
 Famine, than whom Misrule no deadlier daughter
 Feeds from her thousand breasts, though sleeping there
 With lidless eyes, lie Faith, and Plague, and Slaughter,
 A ghastly brood ; conceived of Lethe's sullen water. 3945

XVIII

There was no food, the corn was trampled down,
 The flocks and herds had perished ; on the shore
 The dead and putrid fish were ever thrown ;
 The deeps were foodless, and the winds no more
 Creaked with the weight of birds, but, as before 3950
 Those wingèd things sprang forth, were void of shade ;
 The vines and orchards, Autumn's golden store,
 Were burned ;—so that the meanest food was weighed
 With gold, and Avarice died before the god it made.

XIX

There was no corn—in the wide market-place 3955
 All loathliest things, even human flesh, was sold ;
 They weighed it in small scales—and many a face
 Was fixed in eager horror then : his gold
 The miser brought ; the tender maid, grown bold
 Through hunger, bared her scornèd charms in vain ; 3960
 The mother brought her eldest-born, controlled
 By instinct blind as love, but turned again
 And bade her infant suck, and died in silent pain.

XX

Then fell blue Plague upon the race of man.
 'O, for the sheathèd steel, so late which gave 3965
 Oblivion to the dead, when the streets ran
 With brothers' blood! O, that the earthquake's grave
 Would gape, or Ocean lift its stifling wave!
 Vain cries—throughout the streets, thousands pursued
 Each by his fiery torture howl and rave, 3970
 Or sit, in frenzy's unimagined mood,
 Upon fresh heaps of dead; a ghastly multitude.

XXI

It was not hunger now, but thirst. Each well
 Was choked with rotting corpses, and became
 A cauldron of green mist made visible 3975
 At sunrise. Thither still the myriads came,
 Seeking to quench the agony of the flame,
 Which raged like poison through their bursting veins;
 Naked they were from torture, without shame,
 Spotted with nameless scars and lurid blains, 3980
 Childhood, and youth, and age, writhing in savage pains.

XXII

It was not thirst but madness! Many saw
 Their own lean image everywhere, it went
 A ghastlier self beside them, till the awe
 Of that dread sight to self-destruction sent 3985
 Those shrieking victims; some, ere life was spent,
 Sought, with a horrid sympathy, to shed
 Contagion on the sound; and others rent
 Their matted hair, and cried aloud, 'We tread
 On fire! the avenging Power his hell on earth has spread!' 3990

XXIII

Sometimes the living by the dead were hid.
 Near the great fountain in the public square,
 Where corpses made a crumbling pyramid
 Under the sun, was heard one stifled prayer
 For life, in the hot silence of the air; 3995
 And strange 'twas, amid that hideous heap to see
 Some shrouded in their long and golden hair,
 As if not dead, but slumbering quietly
 Like forms which sculptors carve, then love to agony.

XXIV

Famine had spared the palace of the king:— 4000
 He rioted in festival the while,
 He and his guards and priests; but Plague did fling
 One shadow upon all. Famine can smile
 On him who brings it food, and pass, with guile

Of thankful falsehood, like a courtier gray, 4005
 The house-dog of the throne; but many a mile
 Comes Plague, a wingèd wolf, who loathes alway
 The garbage and the scum that strangers make her prey.

XXV

So, near the throne, amid the gorgeous feast, 4010
 Sheathed in resplendent arms, or loosely dight
 To luxury, ere the mockery yet had ceased
 That lingered on his lips, the warrior's might
 Was loosened, and a new and ghastlier night
 In dreams of frenzy lapped his eyes; he fell
 Headlong, or with stiff eyeballs sate upright 4015
 Among the guests, or raving mad, did tell
 Strange truths; a dying seer of dark oppression's hell.

XXVI

The Princes and the Priests were pale with terror;
 That monstrous faith wherewith they ruled mankind,
 Fell, like a shaft loosed by the bowman's error, 4020
 On their own hearts: they sought and they could find
 No refuge—'twas the blind who led the blind!
 So, through the desolate streets to the high fane,
 The many-tongued and endless armies wind
 In sad procession: each among the train 4025
 To his own Idol lifts his supplications vain.

XXVII

'O God!' they cried, 'we know our secret pride
 Has scorned thee, and thy worship, and thy name;
 Secure in human power we have defied
 Thy fearful might; we bend in fear and shame 4030
 Before thy presence; with the dust we claim
 Kindred; be merciful, O King of Heaven!
 Most justly have we suffered for thy fame
 Made dim, but be at length our sins forgiven,
 Ere to despair and death thy worshippers be driven. 4035

XXVIII

'O King of Glory! thou alone hast power!
 Who can resist thy will? who can restrain
 Thy wrath, when on the guilty thou dost shower
 The shafts of thy revenge, a blistering rain?
 Greatest and best, be merciful again! 4040
 Have we not stabbed thine enemies, and made
 The Earth an altar, and the Heavens a fane,
 Where thou wert worshipped with their blood, and laid
 Those hearts in dust which would thy searchless works have weighed?

XXIX

'Well didst thou loosen on this impious City
 Thine angels of revenge: recall them now;
 Thy worshippers, abased, here kneel for pity,
 And bind their souls by an immortal vow:
 We swear by thee! and to our oath do thou
 Give sanction, from thine hell of fiends and flame,
 That we will kill with fire and torments slow,
 The last of those who mocked thy holy name,
 And scorned the sacred laws thy prophets did proclaim.'

XXX

Thus they with trembling limbs and pallid lips
 Worshipped their own hearts' image, dim and vast,
 Scared by the shade wherewith they would eclipse
 The light of other minds;—troubled they passed
 From the great Temple;—fiercely still and fast
 The arrows of the plague among them fell,
 And they on one another gazed aghast,
 And through the hosts contention wild befell,
 As each of his own god the wondrous works did tell.

XXXI

And Oromaze, Joshua, and Mahomet,
 Moses and Buddh, Zerdusht, and Brahm, and Foh,
 A tumult of strange names, which never met
 Before, as watchwords of a single woe,
 Arose; each raging votary 'gan to throw
 Aloft his armèd hands, and each did howl
 'Our God alone is God!'—and slaughter now
 Would have gone forth, when from beneath a cowl
 A voice came forth, which pierced like ice through every soul.

XXXII

'Twas an Iberian Priest from whom it came,
 A zealous man, who led the legioned West,
 With words which faith and pride had steeped in flame,
 To quell the unbelievers; a dire guest
 Even to his friends was he, for in his breast
 Did hate and guile lie watchful, intertwined,
 Twin serpents in one deep and winding nest;
 He loathed all faith beside his own, and pined
 To wreak his fear of Heaven in vengeance on mankind.

XXXIII

But more he loathed and hated the clear light
 Of wisdom and free thought, and more did fear,
 Lest, kindled once, its beams might pierce the night,
 Even where his Idol stood; for, far and near
 Did many a heart in Europe leap to hear

That faith and tyranny were trampled down;
 Many a pale victim, doomed for truth to share
 The murderer's cell, or see, with helpless groan,
 The priests his children drag for slaves to serve their own.

XXXIV

He dared not kill the infidels with fire 4090
 Or steel, in Europe; the slow agonies
 Of legal torture mocked his keen desire:
 So he made truce with those who did despise
 The expiation, and the sacrifice,
 That, though detested, Islam's kindred creed 4095
 Might crush for him those deadlier enemies;
 For fear of God did in his bosom breed
 A jealous hate of man, an unreposing need.

XXXV

'Peace! Peace!' he cried, 'when we are dead, the Day
 Of Judgement comes, and all shall surely know 4100
 Whose God is God, each fearfully shall pay
 The errors of his faith in endless woe!
 But there is sent a mortal vengeance now
 On earth, because an impious race had spurned
 Him whom we all adore,—a subtle foe, 4105
 By whom for ye this dread reward was earned,
 And kingly thrones, which rest on faith, nigh overturned.

XXXVI

'Think ye, because ye weep, and kneel, and pray,
 That God will lull the pestilence? It rose
 Even from beneath his throne, where, many a day, 4110
 His mercy soothed it to a dark repose:
 It walks upon the earth to judge his foes;
 And what are thou and I, that he should deign
 To curb his ghastly minister, or close
 The gates of death, ere they receive the twain 4115
 Who shook with mortal spells his undefended reign?

XXXVII

'Ay, there is famine in the gulf of hell,
 Its giant worms of fire for ever yawn.—
 Their lurid eyes are on us! those who fell
 By the swift shafts of pestilence ere dawn, 4120
 Are in their jaws! they hunger for the spawn
 Of Satan, their own brethren, who were sent
 To make our souls their spoil. See! see! they fawn
 Like dogs, and they will sleep with luxury spent,
 When those detested hearts their iron fangs have rent! 4125

XXXVIII

'Our God may then lull Pestilence to sleep:—
 Pile high the pyre of expiation now,
 A forest's spoil of boughs, and on the heap
 Pour venomous gums, which sullenly and slow,
 When touched by flame, shall burn, and melt, and flow, 4130
 A stream of clinging fire,—and fix on high
 A net of iron, and spread forth below
 A couch of snakes, and scorpions, and the fry
 Of centipedes and worms, earth's hellish progeny!

XXXIX

'Let Laon and Laone on that pyre,
 Linked tight with burning brass, perish!—then pray 4135
 That, with this sacrifice, the withering ire
 Of Heaven may be appeased.' He ceased, and they
 A space stood silent, as far, far away
 The echoes of his voice among them died; 4140
 And he knelt down upon the dust, always
 Muttering the curses of his speechless pride,
 Whilst shame, and fear, and awe, the armies did divide.

XL

His voice was like a blast that burst the portal
 Of fabled hell; and as he spake, each one 4145
 Saw gape beneath the chasms of fire immortal,
 And Heaven above seemed cloven, where, on a throne
 Girt round with storms and shadows, sate alone
 Their King and Judge—fear killed in every breast
 All natural pity then, a fear unknown 4150
 Before, and with an inward fire possessed,
 They raged like homeless beasts whom burning woods invest.

XLI

'Twas morn.—At noon the public crier went forth,
 Proclaiming through the living and the dead,
 'The Monarch saith, that his great Empire's worth 4155
 Is set on Laon and Laone's head:
 He who but one yet living here can lead,
 Or who the life from both their hearts can wring,
 Shall be the kingdom's heir, a glorious meed!
 But he who both alive can hither bring, 4160
 The Princess shall espouse, and reign an equal King.'

XLII

Ere night the pyre was piled, the net of iron
 Was spread above, the fearful couch below;
 It overtopped the towers that did environ
 That spacious square; for Fear is never slow 4165
 To build the thrones of Hate, her mate and foe,

So, she scourged forth the maniac multitude
 To rear this pyramid—tottering and slow,
 Plague-stricken, foodless, like lean herds pursued
 By gadflies, they have piled the heath, and gums, and wood. 4170

XLIH

Night came, a starless and a moonless gloom.
 Until the dawn, those hosts of many a nation
 Stood round that pile, as near one lover's tomb
 Two gentle sisters mourn their desolation;
 And in the silence of that expectation, 4175
 Was heard on high the reptiles' hiss and crawl—
 It was so deep—save when the devastation
 Of the swift pest, with fearful interval,
 Marking its path with shrieks, among the crowd would fall.

XLIV

Morn came,—among those sleepless multitudes, 4180
 Madness, and Fear, and Plague, and Famine still
 Heaped corpse on corpse, as in autumnal woods
 The frosts of many a wind with dead leaves fill
 Earth's cold and sullen brooks; in silence, still
 The pale survivors stood; ere noon, the fear 4185
 Of Hell became a panic, which did kill
 Like hunger or disease, with whispers drear,
 As 'Hush! hark! Come they yet? Just Heaven! thine hour is near!'

XLV

And Priests rushed through their ranks, some counterfeiting
 The rage they did inspire, some mad indeed 4190
 With their own lies; they said their god was waiting
 To see his enemies writhe, and burn, and bleed,—
 And that, till then, the snakes of Hell had need
 Of human souls:—three hundred furnaces
 Soon blazed through the wide City, where, with speed, 4195
 Men brought their infidel kindred to appease
 God's wrath, and while they burned, knelt round on quivering knees.

XLVI

The noontide sun was darkened with that smoke,
 The winds of eve dispersed those ashes gray.
 The madness which these rites had lulled, awoke 4200
 Again at sunset.—Who shall dare to say
 The deeds which night and fear brought forth, or weigh
 In balance just the good and evil there?
 He might man's deep and searchless heart display,
 And cast a light on those dim labyrinths, where 4205
 Hope, near imagined chasms, is struggling with despair.

XLVII

'Tis said, a mother dragged three children then,
 To those fierce flames which roast the eyes in the head,
 And laughed, and died; and that unholy men,
 Feasting like fiends upon the infidel dead, 4210
 Looked from their meal, and saw an Angel tread
 The visible floor of Heaven, and it was she!
 And, on that night, one without doubt or dread
 Came to the fire, and said, 'Stop, I am he!
 Kill me!'—They burned them both with hellish mockery. 4215

XLVIII

And, one by, one, that night, young maidens came,
 Beauteous and calm, like shapes of living stone
 Clothed in the light of dreams, and by the flame
 Which shrank as overgorged, they laid them down,
 And sung a low sweet song, of which alone 4220
 One word was heard, and that was Liberty;
 And that some kissed their marble feet, with moan
 Like love, and died; and then that they did die
 With happy smiles, which sunk in white tranquillity.

CANTO XI

I

SHE saw me not—she heard me not—alone 4225
 Upon the mountain's dizzy brink she stood;
 She spake not, breathed not, moved not—there was thrown
 Over her look, the shadow of a mood
 Which only clothes the heart in solitude,
 A thought of voiceless depth;—she stood alone, 4230
 Above, the Heavens were spread;—below, the flood
 Was murmuring in its caves;—the wind had blown
 Her hair apart, through which her eyes and forehead shone.

II

A cloud was hanging o'er the western mountains;
 Before its blue and moveless depth were flying 4235
 Gray mists poured forth from the unresting fountains
 Of darkness in the North:—the day was dying:—
 Sudden, the sun shone forth, its beams were lying
 Like boiling gold on Ocean, strange to see,
 And on the shattered vapours, which defying 4240
 The power of light in vain, tossed restlessly
 In the red Heaven, like wrecks in a tempestuous sea.

III

It was a stream of living beams, whose bank
 On either side by the cloud's cleft was made;
 And where its chasms that flood of glory drank, 4245

Its waves gushed forth like fire, and as if swayed
 By some mute tempest, rolled on *her*; the shade
 Of her bright image floated on the river
 Of liquid light, which then did end and fade—
 Her radiant shape upon its verge did shiver; 4250
 Aloft, her flowing hair like strings of flame did quiver.

IV

I stood beside her, but she saw me not—
 She looked upon the sea, and skies, and earth;
 Rapture, and love, and admiration wrought
 A passion deeper far than tears, or mirth, 4255
 Or speech, or gesture, or whate'er has birth
 From common joy; which with the speechless feeling
 That led her there united, and shot forth
 From her far eyes a light of deep revealing,
 All but her dearest self from my regard concealing. 4260

V

Her lips were parted, and the measured breath
 Was now heard there;—her dark and intricate eyes
 Orb within orb, deeper than sleep or death,
 Absorbed the glories of the burning skies,
 Which, mingling with her heart's deep ecstasies, 4265
 Burst from her looks and gestures;—and a light
 Of liquid tenderness, like love, did rise
 From her whole frame, an atmosphere which quite
 Arrayed her in its beams, tremulous and soft and bright.

VI

She would have clasped me to her glowing frame; 4270
 Those warm and odorous lips might soon have shed
 On mine the fragrance and the invisible flame
 Which now the cold winds stole;—she would have laid
 Upon my languid heart her dearest head;
 I might have heard her voice, tender and sweet; 4275
 Her eyes mingling with mine, might soon have fed
 My soul with their own joy.—One moment yet
 I gazed—we parted then, never again to meet!

VII

Never but once to meet on Earth again!
 She heard me as I fled—her eager tone 4280
 Sunk on my heart, and almost wove a chain
 Around my will to link it with her own,
 So that my stern resolve was almost gone.
 'I cannot reach thee! whither dost thou fly?
 My steps are faint—Come back, thou dearest one— 4285
 Return, ah me! return!'—The wind passed by
 On which those accents died, faint, far, and lingeringly.

VIII

Woe! Woe! that moonless midnight!—Want and Pest
 Were horrible, but one more fell doth rear,
 As in a hydra's swarming lair, its crest 4290
 Eminent among those victims—even the Fear
 Of Hell: each girt by the hot atmosphere
 Of his blind agony, like a scorpion stung
 By his own rage upon his burning bier
 Of circling coals of fire; but still there clung 4295
 One hope, like a keen sword on starting threads uphung:

IX

Not death—death was no more refuge or rest;
 Not life—it was despair to be!—not sleep,
 For fiends and chasms of fire had dispossessed
 All natural dreams: to wake was not to weep, 4300
 But to gaze mad and pallid, at the leap
 To which the Future, like a snaky scourge,
 Or like some tyrant's eye, which aye doth keep
 Its withering beam upon his slaves, did urge
 Their steps; they heard the roar of Hell's sulphureous surge. 4305

X

Each of that multitude, alone, and lost
 To sense of outward things, one hope yet knew;
 As on a foam-girt crag some seaman tossed
 Stares at the rising tide, or like the crew 4310
 Whilst now the ship is splitting through and through;
 Each, if the tramp of a far steed was heard,
 Started from sick despair, or if there flew
 One murmur on the wind, or if some word
 Which none can gather yet, the distant crowd has stirred.

XI

Why became cheeks, wan with the kiss of death, 4315
 Paler from hope? they had sustained despair.
 Why watched those myriads with suspended breath
 Sleepless a second night? they are not here,
 The victims, and hour by hour, a vision drear,
 Warm corpses fall upon the clay-cold dead; 4320
 And even in death their lips are wreathed with fear.—
 The crowd is mute and moveless—overhead
 Silent Arcturus shines—'Ha! hear'st thou not the tread

XII

'Of rushing feet? laughter? the shout, the scream,
 Of triumph not to be contained? See! hark! 4325
 They come, they come! give way!' Alas, ye deem
 Falsely—'tis but a crowd of maniacs stark
 Driven, like a troop of spectres, through the dark,

From the choked well, whence a bright death-fire sprung,
 A lurid earth-star, which dropped many a spark 4330
 From its blue train, and spreading widely, clung
 To their wild hair, like mist the topmost pines among.

XIII

And many, from the crowd collected there,
 Joined that strange dance in fearful sympathies;
 There was the silence of a long despair, 4335
 When the last echo of those terrible cries
 Came from a distant street, like agonies
 Stifled afar.—Before the Tyrant's throne
 All night his aged Senate sate, their eyes
 In stony expectation fixed; when one 4340
 Sudden before them stood, a Stranger and alone.

XIV

Dark Priests and haughty Warriors gazed on him
 With baffled wonder, for a hermit's vest
 Concealed his face; but, when he spake, his tone,
 Ere yet the matter did their thoughts arrest,— 4345
 Earnest, benignant, calm, as from a breast
 Void of all hate or terror—made them start;
 For as with gentle accents he addressed
 His speech to them, on each unwilling heart
 Unusual awe did fall—a spirit-quelling dart. 4350

XV

'Ye Princes of the Earth, ye sit aghast
 Amid the ruin which yourselves have made,
 Yes, Desolation heard your trumpet's blast,
 And sprang from sleep!—dark Terror has obeyed
 Your bidding—O, that I whom ye have made 4355
 Your foe, could set my dearest enemy free
 From pain and fear! but evil casts a shade,
 Which cannot pass so soon, and Hate must be
 The nurse and parent still of an ill progeny.

XVI

'Ye turn to Heaven for aid in your distress;
 Alas, that ye, the mighty and the wise, 4360
 Who, if ye dared, might not aspire to less
 Than ye conceive of power, should fear the lies
 Which thou, and thou, didst frame for mysteries
 To blind your slaves:—consider your own thought, 4365
 An empty and a cruel sacrifice
 Ye now prepare, for a vain idol wrought
 Out of the fears and hate which vain desires have brought.

4361 the mighty] tho' mighty *ed. 1818.*

4362 ye] he *ed. 1818.*

XVII

'Ye seek for happiness—alas, the day!
 Ye find it not in luxury nor in gold, 4370
 Nor in the fame, nor in the envied sway
 For which, O willing slaves to Custom old,
 Severe taskmistress! ye your hearts have sold.
 Ye seek for peace, and when ye die, to dream
 No evil dreams: all mortal things are cold 4375
 And senseless then; if aught survive, I deem
 It must be love and joy, for they immortal seem.

XVIII

'Fear not the future, weep not for the past.
 O, could I win your ears to dare be now
 Glorious, and great, and calm! that ye would cast 4380
 Into the dust those symbols of your woe,
 Purple, and gold, and steel! that ye would go
 Proclaiming to the nations whence ye came,
 That Want, and Plague, and Fear, from slavery flow;
 And that mankind is free, and that the shame 4385
 Of royalty and faith is lost in freedom's fame!

XIX

'If thus, 'tis well—if not, I come to say
 That Laon—' while the Stranger spoke, among
 The Council sudden tumult and affray
 Arose, for many of those warriors young, 4390
 Had on his eloquent accents fed and hung
 Like bees on mountain-flowers; they knew the truth,
 And from their thrones in vindication sprung;
 The men of faith and law then without ruth
 Drew forth their secret steel, and stabbed each ardent youth. 4395

XX

They stabbed them in the back and sneered—a slave
 Who stood behind the throne, those corpses drew
 Each to its bloody, dark, and secret grave;
 And one more daring raised his steel anew
 To pierce the Stranger. 'What hast thou to do 4400
 With me, poor wretch?'—Calm, solemn, and severe,
 That voice unstrung his sinews, and he threw
 His dagger on the ground, and pale with fear,
 Sate silently—his voice then did the Stranger rear.

XXI

'It doth avail not that I weep for ye— 4405
 Ye cannot change, since ye are old and gray,
 And ye have chosen your lot—your fame must be
 A book of blood, whence in a milder day
 Men shall learn truth, when ye are wrapped in clay:

Now ye shall triumph. I am Laon's friend,
 And him to your revenge will I betray,
 So ye concede one easy boon. Attend!
 For now I speak of things which ye can apprehend.

4410

XXII

'There is a People mighty in its youth,
 A land beyond the Oceans of the West,
 Where, though with rudest rites, Freedom and Truth
 Are worshipped; from a glorious Mother's breast,
 Who, since high Athens fell, among the rest
 Sate like the Queen of Nations, but in woe,
 By inbred monsters outraged and oppressed,
 Turns to her chainless child for succour now,
 It draws the milk of Power in Wisdom's fullest flow.

4415

4420

XXIII

'That land is like an Eagle, whose young gaze
 Feeds on the noontide beam, whose golden plume
 Floats moveless on the storm, and in the blaze
 Of sunrise gleams when Earth is wrapped in gloom;
 An epitaph of glory for the tomb
 Of murdered Europe may thy fame be made,
 Great People! as the sands shalt thou become;
 Thy growth is swift as morn, when night must fade;
 The multitudinous Earth shall sleep beneath thy shade.

4425

4430

XXIV

'Yes, in the desert there is built a home
 For Freedom. Genius is made strong to rear
 The monuments of man beneath the dome
 Of a new Heaven; myriads assemble there,
 Whom the proud lords of man, in rage or fear,
 Drive from their wasted homes: the boon I pray
 Is this—that Cythna shall be convoyed there—
 Nay, start not at the name—America!
 And then to you this night Laon will I betray.

4435

4440

XXV

'With me do what you will. I am your foe!
 The light of such a joy as makes the stare
 Of hungry snakes like living emeralds glow,
 Shone in a hundred human eyes—'Where, where
 Is Laon? Hasten! fly! drag him swiftly here!
 We grant thy boon.'—'I put no trust in ye,
 Swear by the Power ye dread.'—'We swear, we swear!
 The Stranger threw his vest back suddenly,
 And smiled in gentle pride, and said, 'Lo! I am he!'

4445

CANTO XII

I

THE transport of a fierce and monstrous gladness 4450
 Spread through the multitudinous streets, fast flying
 Upon the winds of fear; from his dull madness
 The starveling waked, and died in joy; the dying,
 Among the corpses in stark agony lying,
 Just heard the happy tidings, and in hope 4455
 Closed their faint eyes; from house to house replying
 With loud acclaim, the living shook Heaven's cope,
 And filled the startled Earth with echoes: morn did ope

II

Its pale eyes then; and lo! the long array 4460
 Of guards in golden arms, and Priests beside,
 Singing their bloody hymns, whose garbs betray
 The blackness of the faith it seems to hide;
 And see, the Tyrant's gem-wrought chariot glide
 Among the gloomy cowls and glittering spears—
 A Shape of light is sitting by his side, 4465
 A child most beautiful. I' the midst appears
 Laon,—exempt alone from mortal hopes and fears.

III

His head and feet are bare, his hands are bound
 Behind with heavy chains, yet none do wreak
 Their scoffs on him, though myriads throng around; 4470
 There are no sneers upon his lip which speak
 That scorn or hate has made him bold; his cheek
 Resolve has not turned pale,—his eyes are mild
 And calm, and, like the morn about to break,
 Smile on mankind—his heart seems reconciled 4475
 To all things and itself, like a reposing child.

IV

Tumult was in the soul of all beside,
 Ill joy, or doubt, or fear; but those who saw
 Their tranquil victim pass, felt wonder glide
 Into their brain, and became calm with awe.— 4480
 See, the slow pageant near the pile doth draw.
 A thousand torches in the spacious square,
 Borne by the ready slaves of ruthless law,
 Await the signal round: the morning fair
 Is changed to a dim night by that unnatural glare. 4485

V

And see! beneath a sun-bright canopy,
 Upon a platform level with the pile,
 The anxious Tyrant sit, enthroned on high,
 Girt by the chieftains of the host; all smile
 In expectation, but one child: the while 4490

I, Laon, led by mutes, ascend my bier
 Of fire, and look around: each distant isle
 Is dark in the bright dawn; towers far and near,
 Pierce like reposing flames the tremulous atmosphere.

VI

There was such silence through the host, as when
 An earthquake trampling on some populous town,
 Has crushed ten thousand with one tread, and men
 Expect the second; all were mute but one,
 That fairest child, who, bold with love, alone
 Stood up before the King, without avail, 4500
 Pleading for Laon's life—her stifled groan
 Was heard—she trembled like one aspen pale
 Among the gloomy pines of a Norwegian vale.

VII

What were his thoughts linked in the morning sun,
 Among those reptiles, stingless with delay, 4505
 Even like a tyrant's wrath?—The signal-gun
 Roared—hark, again! In that dread pause he lay
 As in a quiet dream—the slaves obey—
 A thousand torches drop,—and hark, the last
 Bursts on that awful silence; far away, 4510
 Millions, with hearts that beat both loud and fast,
 Watch for the springing flame expectant and aghast.

VIII

They fly—the torches fall—a cry of fear
 Has startled the triumphant!—they recede!
 For ere the cannon's roar has died, they hear 4515
 The tramp of hoofs like earthquake, and a steed
 Dark and gigantic, with the tempest's speed,
 Bursts through their ranks: a woman sits thereon,
 Fairer, it seems, than aught that earth can breed,
 Calm, radiant, like the phantom of the dawn, 4520
 A spirit from the caves of daylight wandering gone.

IX

All thought it was God's Angel come to sweep
 The lingering guilty to their fiery grave;
 The Tyrant from his throne in dread did leap,—
 Her innocence his child from fear did save; 4525
 Scared by the faith they feigned, each priestly slave
 Knelt for his mercy whom they served with blood,
 And, like the reflux of a mighty wave
 Sucked into the loud sea, the multitude
 With crushing panic, fled in terror's altered mood. 4530

X

They pause, they blush, they gaze,—a gathering shout
 Bursts like one sound from the ten thousand streams
 Of a tempestuous sea:—that sudden rout
 One checked, who, never in his mildest dreams
 Felt awe from grace or loveliness, the seams 4535
 Of his rent heart so hard and cold a creed
 Had seared with blistering ice—but he misdeems
 That he is wise, whose wounds do only bleed
 Inly for self—thus thought the Iberian Priest indeed,

XI

And others too, thought he was wise to see, 4540
 In pain, and fear, and hate, something divine;
 In love and beauty, no divinity.—
 Now with a bitter smile, whose light did shine
 Like a fiend's hope upon his lips and eyne,
 He said, and the persuasion of that sneer 4545
 Rallied his trembling comrades—'Is it mine
 To stand alone, when kings and soldiers fear
 A woman? Heaven has sent its other victim here.'

XII

'Were it not impious,' said the King, 'to break
 Our holy oath?'—'Impious to keep it, say!' 4550
 Shrieked the exulting Priest—'Slaves, to the stake
 Bind her, and on my head the burden lay
 Of her just torments:—at the Judgement Day
 Will I stand up before the golden throne
 Of Heaven, and cry, "To thee did I betray 4555
 An Infidel; but for me she would have known
 Another moment's joy! the glory be thine own!"'

XIII

They trembled, but replied not, nor obeyed,
 Pausing in breathless silence. Cythna sprung
 From her gigantic steed, who, like a shade 4560
 Chased by the winds, those vacant streets among
 Fled tameless, as the brazen rein she flung
 Upon his neck, and kissed his moonèd brow.
 A piteous sight, that one so fair and young,
 The clasp of such a fearful death should woo 4565
 With smiles of tender joy as beamed from Cythna now.

XIV

The warm tears burst in spite of faith and fear
 From many a tremulous eye, but like soft dews
 Which feed Spring's earliest buds, hung gathered there,
 Frozen by doubt,—alas! they could not choose 4570
 But weep; for when her faint limbs did refuse

To climb the pyre, upon the mutes she smiled ;
 And with her eloquent gestures, and the hues
 Of her quick lips, even as a weary child
 Wins sleep from some fond nurse with its caresses mild, 4575

XV

She won them, though unwilling, her to bind
 Near me, among the snakes. When there had fled
 One soft reproach that was most thrilling kind,
 She smiled on me, and nothing then we said, 4580
 But each upon the other's countenance fed
 Looks of insatiate love ; the mighty veil
 Which doth divide the living and the dead
 Was almost rent, the world grew dim and pale,—
 All light in Heaven or Earth beside our love did fail.—

XVI

Yet—yet—one brief relapse, like the last beam 4585
 Of dying flames, the stainless air around
 Hung silent and serene—a blood-red gleam
 Burst upwards, hurling fiercely from the ground
 The globèd smoke,—I heard the mighty sound
 Of its uprise, like a tempestuous ocean ; 4590
 And through its chasms I saw, as in a swoond,
 The tyrant's child fall without life or motion
 Before his throne, subdued by some unseen emotion.

XVII

And is this death?—The pyre has disappeared,
 The Pestilence, the Tyrant, and the throng ; 4595
 The flames grow silent—slowly there is heard
 The music of a breath-suspending song,
 Which, like the kiss of love when life is young,
 Steeps the faint eyes in darkness sweet and deep ;
 With ever-changing notes it floats along, 4600
 Till on my passive soul there seemed to creep
 A melody, like waves on wrinkled sands that leap.

XVIII

The warm touch of a soft and tremulous hand
 Wakened me then ; lo ! Cythna sate reclined
 Beside me, on the waved and golden sand 4605
 Of a clear pool, upon a bank o'ertwined
 With strange and star-bright flowers, which to the wind
 Breathed divine odour ; high above, was spread
 The emerald heaven of trees of unknown kind,
 Whose moonlike blooms and bright fruit overhead 4610
 A shadow, which was light, upon the waters shed.

XIX

And round about sloped many a lawny mountain
 With incense-bearing forests, and vast caves
 Of marble radiance, to that mighty fountain;
 And where the flood its own bright margin laves, 4615
 Their echoes talk with its eternal waves,
 Which, from the depths whose jagged caverns breed
 Their unrepenting strife, it lifts and heaves,—
 Till through a chasm of hills they roll, and feed
 A river deep, which flies with smooth but arrowy speed. 4620

XX

As we sat gazing in a trance of wonder,
 A boat approached, borne by the musical air
 Along the waves which sung and sparkled under
 Its rapid keel—a wingèd shape sat there,
 A child with silver-shining wings, so fair, 4625
 That as her bark did through the waters glide,
 The shadow of the lingering waves did wear
 Light, as from starry beams; from side to side,
 While veering to the wind her plumes the bark did guide.

XXI

The boat was one curved shell of hollow pearl, 4630
 Almost translucent with the light divine
 Of her within; the prow and stern did curl
 Hornèd on high, like the young moon supine,
 When o'er dim twilight mountains dark with pine,
 It floats upon the sunset's sea of beams, 4635
 Whose golden waves in many a purple line
 Fade fast, till borne on sunlight's ebbing streams,
 Dilating, on earth's verge the sunken meteor gleams.

XXII

Its keel has struck the sands beside our feet;—
 Then Cythna turned to me, and from her eyes 4640
 Which swam with unshed tears, a look more sweet
 Than happy love, a wild and glad surprise,
 Glanced as she spake: 'Ay, this is Paradise
 And not a dream, and we are all united!
 Lo, that is mine own child, who in the guise 4645
 Of madness came, like day to one benighted
 In lonesome woods: my heart is now too well requited!'

XXIII

And then she wept aloud, and in her arms
 Clasped that bright Shape, less marvellously fair
 Than her own human hues and living charms; 4650
 Which, as she leaned in passion's silence there,
 Breathed warmth on the cold bosom of the air,

Which seemed to blush and tremble with delight;
 The glossy darkness of her streaming hair
 Fell o'er that snowy child, and wrapped from sight 4655
 The fond and long embrace which did their hearts unite.

XXIV

Then the bright child, the plumèd Seraph came,
 And fixed its blue and beaming eyes on mine,
 And said, 'I was disturbed by tremulous shame
 When once we met, yet knew that I was thine 4660
 From the same hour in which thy lips divine
 Kindled a clinging dream within my brain,
 Which ever waked when I might sleep, to twine
 Thine image with *her* memory dear—again
 We meet; exempted now from mortal fear or pain. 4665

XXV

'When the consuming flames had wrapped ye round,
 The hope which I had cherished went away;
 I fell in agony on the senseless ground,
 And hid mine eyes in dust, and far astray
 My mind was gone, when bright, like dawning day, 4670
 The Spectre of the Plague before me flew,
 And breathed upon my lips, and seemed to say,
 "They wait for thee, beloved!"—then I knew
 The death-mark on my breast, and became calm anew.

XXVI

'It was the calm of love—for I was dying. 4675
 I saw the black and half-extinguished pyre
 In its own gray and shrunken ashes lying;
 The pitchy smoke of the departed fire
 Still hung in many a hollow dome and spire
 Above the towers, like night; beneath whose shade 4680
 Awed by the ending of their own desire
 The armies stood; a vacancy was made
 In expectation's depth, and so they stood dismayed.

XXVII

'The frightful silence of that altered mood,
 The tortures of the dying clove alone, 4685
 Till one uprose among the multitude,
 And said—"The flood of time is rolling on,
 We stand upon its brink, whilst *they* are gone
 To glide in peace down death's mysterious stream.
 Have ye done well? They moulder flesh and bone, 4690
 Who might have made this life's envenomed dream
 A sweeter draught than ye will ever taste, I deem.

XXVIII

““These perish as the good and great of yore
 Have perished, and their murderers will repent,—
 Yes, vain and barren tears shall flow before 4695
 Yon smoke has faded from the firmament
 Even for this cause, that ye who must lament
 The death of those that made this world so fair,
 Cannot recall them now; but there is lent
 To man the wisdom of a high despair, 4700
 When such can die, and he live on and linger here.

XXIX

““Ay, ye may fear not now the Pestilence,
 From fabled hell as by a charm withdrawn;
 All power and faith must pass, since calmly hence
 In pain and fire have unbelievers gone; 4705
 And ye must sadly turn away, and moan
 In secret, to his home each one returning,
 And to long ages shall this hour be known;
 And slowly shall its memory, ever burning,
 Fill this dark night of things with an eternal morning. 4710

XXX

““For me the world is grown too void and cold,
 Since Hope pursues immortal Destiny
 With steps thus slow—therefore shall ye behold
 How those who love, yet fear not, dare to die;
 Tell to your children this!” Then suddenly 4715
 He sheathed a dagger in his heart and fell;
 My brain grew dark in death, and yet to me
 There came a murmur from the crowd, to tell
 Of deep and mighty change which suddenly befell.

XXXI

‘Then suddenly I stood, a wingèd Thought, 4720
 Before the immortal Senate, and the seat
 Of that star-shining spirit, whence is wrought
 The strength of its dominion, good and great,
 The better Genius of this world’s estate.
 His realm around one mighty Fane is spread, 4725
 Elysian islands bright and fortunate,
 Calm dwellings of the free and happy dead,
 Where I am sent to lead!’ These wingèd words she said,

XXXII

And with the silence of her eloquent smile,
 Bade us embark in her divine canoe; 4730
 Then at the helm we took our seat, the while
 Above her head those plumes of dazzling hue
 Into the winds’ invisible stream she threw,

Sitting beside the prow: like gossamer
 On the swift breath of morn, the vessel flew 4735
 O'er the bright whirlpools of that fountain fair,
 Whose shores receded fast, whilst we seemed lingering there;

XXXIII

Till down that mighty stream, dark, calm, and fleet,
 Between a chasm of cedarn mountains riven,
 Chased by the thronging winds whose viewless feet 4740
 As swift as twinkling beams, had, under Heaven,
 From woods and waves wild sounds and odours driven,
 The boat fled visibly—three nights and days,
 Borne like a cloud through morn, and noon, and even,
 We sailed along the winding watery ways 4745
 Of the vast stream, a long and labyrinthine maze.

XXXIV

A scene of joy and wonder to behold
 That river's shapes and shadows changing ever,
 When the broad sunrise filled with deepening gold
 Its whirlpools, where all hues did spread and quiver; 4750
 And where melodious falls did burst and shiver
 Among rocks clad with flowers, the foam and spray
 Sparkled like stars upon the sunny river,
 Or when the moonlight poured a holier day,
 One vast and glittering lake around green islands lay. 4755

XXXV

Morn, noon, and even, that boat of pearl outran
 The streams which bore it, like the arrowy cloud
 Of tempest, or the speedier thought of man,
 Which flieth forth and cannot make abode;
 Sometimes through forests, deep like night, we glode, 4760
 Between the walls of mighty mountains crowned
 With Cyclopean piles, whose turrets proud,
 The homes of the departed, dimly frowned
 O'er the bright waves which girt their dark foundations round.

XXXVI

Sometimes between the wide and flowering meadows, 4765
 Mile after mile we sailed, and 'twas delight
 To see far off the sunbeams chase the shadows
 Over the grass; sometimes beneath the night
 Of wide and vaulted caves, whose roofs were bright
 With starry gems, we fled, whilst from their deep 4770
 And dark-green chasms, shades beautiful and white,
 Amid sweet sounds across our path would sweep,
 Like swift and lovely dreams that walk the waves of sleep.

XXXVII

And ever as we sailed, our minds were full
 Of love and wisdom, which would overflow 4775
 In converse wild, and sweet, and wonderful,
 And in quick smiles whose light would come and go
 Like music o'er wide waves, and in the flow
 Of sudden tears, and in the mute caress—
 For a deep shade was cleft, and we did know, 4780
 That virtue, though obscured on Earth, not less
 Survives all mortal change in lasting loveliness.

XXXVIII

Three days and nights we sailed, as thought and feeling
 Number delightful hours—for through the sky
 The spherèd lamps of day and night, revealing 4785
 New changes and new glories, rolled on high,
 Sun, Moon, and moonlike lamps, the progeny
 Of a diviner Heaven, serene and fair:
 On the fourth day, wild as a windwrought sea
 The stream became, and fast and faster bare 4790
 The spirit-wingèd boat, steadily speeding there.

XXXIX

Steady and swift, where the waves rolled like mountains
 Within the vast ravine, whose rifts did pour
 Tumultuous floods from their ten thousand fountains,
 The thunder of whose earth-uplifting roar 4795
 Made the air sweep in whirlwinds from the shore,
 Calm as a shade, the boat of that fair child
 Securely fled, that rapid stress before,
 Amid the topmost spray, and sunbows wild,
 Wreathed in the silver mist: in joy and pride we smiled. 4800

XL

The torrent of that wide and raging river
 Is passed, and our aëreal speed suspended.
 We look behind; a golden mist did quiver
 Where its wild surges with the lake were blended,—
 Our bark hung there, as on a line suspended 4805
 Between two heavens,—that windless waveless lake
 Which four great cataracts from four vales, attended
 By mists, aye feed; from rocks and clouds they break,
 And of that azure sea a silent refuge make.

XLI

Motionless resting on the lake awhile, 4810
 I saw its marge of snow-bright mountains rear
 Their peaks aloft, I saw each radiant isle,
 And in the midst, afar, even like a sphere
 Hung in one hollow sky, did there appear

The Temple of the Spirit; on the sound
Which issued thence, drawn nearer and more near,
Like the swift moon this glorious earth around,
The charmed boat approached, and there its haven found.

NOTE ON THE REVOLT OF ISLAM,
BY MRS. SHELLEY

SHELLEY possessed two remarkable qualities of intellect—a brilliant imagination, and a logical exactness of reason. His inclinations led him (he fancied) almost alike to poetry and metaphysical discussions. I say 'he fancied,' because I believe the former to have been paramount, and that it would have gained the mastery even had he struggled against it. However, he said that he deliberated at one time whether he should dedicate himself to poetry or metaphysics; and, resolving on the former, he educated himself for it, discarding in a great measure his philosophical pursuits, and engaging himself in the study of the poets of Greece, Italy, and England. To these may be added a constant perusal of portions of the Old Testament—the Psalms, the Book of Job, the Prophet Isaiah, and others, the sublime poetry of which filled him with delight.

As a poet, his intellect and compositions were powerfully influenced by exterior circumstances, and especially by his place of abode. He was very fond of travelling, and ill-health increased this restlessness. The sufferings occasioned by a cold English winter made him pine, especially when our colder spring arrived, for a more genial climate. In 1816 he again visited Switzerland, and rented a house on the banks of the Lake of Geneva; and many a day, in cloud or sunshine, was passed alone in his boat—sailing as the wind listed, or weltering on the calm waters. The majestic aspect of Nature ministered such thoughts as he afterwards enwove in verse. His lines on the Bridge of the Arve, and his *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*, were written at this time. Perhaps during this summer his genius was checked by association with another poet whose nature was utterly dissimilar to his own, yet who, in the poem he wrote at that time, gave tokens that he shared for a period the more abstract and etherealised inspiration of Shelley. The saddest events awaited his return to England; but such was his fear to wound the feelings of others that he never expressed the anguish he felt, and seldom gave vent to the indignation roused by the persecutions he underwent; while the course of deep unexpressed passion, and the sense of injury, engendered the desire to embody themselves in forms defecated of all the weakness and evil which cling to real life.

He chose therefore for his hero a youth nourished in dreams of liberty, some of whose actions are in direct opposition to the opinions of the world; but who is animated throughout by an ardent love of virtue, and a resolution to confer the boons of political and intellectual freedom on his fellow-creatures. He created for this youth a woman such as he delighted to imagine—full of enthusiasm for the same objects; and they both, with will unvanquished, and the deepest sense of the justice of their cause, met adversity and death. There exists in this poem a memorial of a friend of his youth. The character of the old man who liberates Laon from his tower-prison, and tends on him in

sickness, is founded on that of Doctor Lind, who, when Shelley was at Eton, had often stood by to befriend and support him, and whose name he never mentioned without love and veneration.

During the year 1817 we were established at Marlow in Buckinghamshire. Shelley's choice of abode was fixed chiefly by this town being at no great distance from London, and its neighbourhood to the Thames. The poem was written in his boat, as it floated under the beech-groves of Bisham, or during wanderings in the neighbouring country, which is distinguished for peculiar beauty. The chalk hills break into cliffs that overhang the Thames, or form valleys clothed with beech; the wilder portion of the country is rendered beautiful by exuberant vegetation; and the cultivated part is peculiarly fertile. With all this wealth of Nature which, either in the form of gentlemen's parks or soil dedicated to agriculture, flourishes around, Marlow was inhabited (I hope it is altered now) by a very poor population. The women are lacemakers, and lose their health by sedentary labour, for which they were very ill paid. The Poor-laws ground to the dust not only the paupers, but those who had risen just above that state, and were obliged to pay poor-rates. The changes produced by peace following a long war, and a bad harvest, brought with them the most heart-rending evils to the poor. Shelley afforded what alleviation he could. In the winter, while bringing out his poem, he had a severe attack of ophthalmia, caught while visiting the poor cottages. I mention these things—for this minute and active sympathy with his fellow-creatures gives a thousandfold interest to his speculations, and stamps with reality his pleadings for the human race.

The poem, bold in its opinions and uncompromising in their expression, met with many censurers, not only among those who allow of no virtue but such as supports the cause they espouse, but even among those whose opinions were similar to his own. I extract a portion of a letter written in answer to one of these friends. It best details the impulses of Shelley's mind, and his motives: it was written with entire unreserve; and is therefore a precious monument of his own opinion of his powers, of the purity of his designs, and the ardour with which he clung, in adversity and through the valley of the shadow of death, to views from which he believed the permanent happiness of mankind must eventually spring.

‘*Marlow, Dec. 11, 1817.*

‘I have read and considered all that you say about my general powers, and the particular instance of the poem in which I have attempted to develop them. Nothing can be more satisfactory to me than the interest which your admonitions express. But I think you are mistaken in some points with regard to the peculiar nature of my powers, whatever be their amount. I listened with deference and self-suspicion to your censures of *The Revolt of Islam*; but the productions of mine which you commend hold a very low place in my own esteem; and this reassures me, in some degree at least. The poem was produced by a series of thoughts which filled my mind with unbounded and sustained enthusiasm. I felt the precariousness of my life, and I engaged in this task, resolved to leave some record of myself. Much of what the volume contains was written with the same feeling—as real, though not so prophetic—as the communications of a dying man. I never presumed indeed to consider it anything approaching to faultless; but, when I consider contemporary productions of the same apparent pretensions, I own I was filled with confidence.

I felt that it was in many respects a genuine picture of my own mind. I felt that the sentiments were true, not assumed. And in this have I long believed that my power consists; in sympathy, and that part of the imagination which relates to sentiment and contemplation. I am formed, if for anything not in common with the herd of mankind, to apprehend minute and remote distinctions of feeling, whether relative to external nature or the living beings which surround us, and to communicate the conceptions which result from considering either the moral or the material universe as a whole. Of course, I believe these faculties, which perhaps comprehend all that is sublime in man, to exist very imperfectly in my own mind. But, when you advert to my Chancery-paper, a cold, forced, unimpassioned, insignificant piece of cramped and cautious argument, and to the little scrap about *Mandeville*, which expressed my feelings indeed, but cost scarcely two minutes' thought to express, as specimens of my powers more favourable than that which grew as it were from "the agony and bloody sweat" of intellectual travail; surely I must feel that, in some manner, either I am mistaken in believing that I have any talent at all, or you in the selection of the specimens of it. Yet, after all, I cannot but be conscious, in much of what I write, of an absence of that tranquillity which is the attribute and accompaniment of power. This feeling alone would make your most kind and wise admonitions, on the subject of the economy of intellectual force, valuable to me. And, if I live, or if I see any trust in coming years, doubt not but that I shall do something, whatever it may be, which a serious and earnest estimate of my powers will suggest to me, and which will be in every respect accommodated to their utmost limits.' [Shelley to Godwin.]

PRINCE ATHANASE¹

A FRAGMENT

[Written at Marlow in 1817, towards the close of the year; first published in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. Part I is dated by Mrs. Shelley, 'December, 1817,' the remainder, 'Marlow, 1817.' The verses were probably rehandled in Italy during the following year. Sources of the text are (1) *Posth. Poems*, 1824; (2) *Poetical Works*, 1839, edd. 1st and 2nd; (3) a much-tortured draft amongst the Bodleian MSS., collated by Mr. C. D. Locock. For (1) and (2) Mrs. Shelley is responsible. Our text (enlarged by about thirty lines from the Bodleian MS.) follows for the most part the *P. W.*, 1839; verbal exceptions are pointed out in the footnotes. See also the Editor's Notes at the end of this volume, and Mr. Locock's *Examination of the Shelley MSS. in the Bodleian Library*, Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1903.]

PART I

THERE was a youth, who, as with toil and travel,
Had grown quite weak and gray before his time;
Nor any could the restless griefs unravel

Which burned within him, withering up his prime
And goading him, like fiends, from land to land.
Not his the load of any secret crime,

5

¹ The idea Shelley had formed of Prince Athanase was a good deal modelled on *Alastor*. In the first sketch of the poem, he named it *Pandemos and Urania*. Athanase seeks through the

For nought of ill his heart could understand,
 But pity and wild sorrow for the same;—
 Not his the thirst for glory or command,
 Baffled with blast of hope-consuming shame; 10
 Nor evil joys which fire the vulgar breast,
 And quench in speedy smoke its feeble flame,
 Had left within his soul their dark unrest:
 Nor what religion fables of the grave
 Feared he,—Philosophy's accepted guest. 15
 For none than he a purer heart could have,
 Or that loved good more for itself alone;
 Of nought in heaven or earth was he the slave.
 What sorrow, strange, and shadowy, and unknown,
 Sent him, a hopeless wanderer, through mankind?— 20
 If with a human sadness he did groan,
 He had a gentle yet aspiring mind;
 Just, innocent, with varied learning fed;
 And such a glorious consolation find
 In others' joy, when all their own is dead: 25
 He loved, and laboured for his kind in grief,
 And yet, unlike all others, it is said
 That from such toil he never found relief.
 Although a child of fortune and of power,
 Of an ancestral name the orphan chief, 30
 His soul had wedded Wisdom, and her dower
 Is love and justice, clothed in which he sate
 Apart from men, as in a lonely tower,
 Pitying the tumult of their dark estate.—
 Yet even in youth did he not e'er abuse 35
 The strength of wealth or thought, to consecrate
 Those false opinions which the harsh rich use
 To blind the world they famish for their pride;
 Nor did he hold from any man his dues,
 But, like a steward in honest dealings tried, 40
 With those who toiled and wept, the poor and wise,
 His riches and his cares he did divide.

19 strange *ed.* 1839; deep *ed.* 1824.

world the One whom he may love. He meets, in the ship in which he is embarked, a lady who appears to him to embody his ideal of love and beauty. But she proves to be Pandemos, or the earthly and unworthy Venus; who, after disappointing his cherished dreams and hopes, deserts him. Athanase, crushed by sorrow, pines and dies. 'On his deathbed, the lady who can really reply to his soul comes and kisses his lips' (*The Deathbed of Athanase*). The poet describes her [in the words of the final fragment, p. 166]. This slender note is all we have to aid our imagination in shaping out the form of the poem, such as its author imagined.—[MRS. SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

Fearless he was, and scorning all disguise,
 What he dared do or think, though men might start,
 He spoke with mild yet unaverted eyes; 45

Liberal he was of soul, and frank of heart,
 And to his many friends—all loved him well—
 Whate'er he knew or felt he would impart,

If words he found those inmost thoughts to tell;
 If not, he smiled or wept; and his weak foes 50
 He neither spurned nor hated—though with fell

And mortal hate their thousand voices rose,
 They passed like aimless arrows from his ear—
 Nor did his heart or mind its portal close

To those, or them, or any, whom life's sphere 55
 May comprehend within its wide array.
 What sadness made that vernal spirit sere?—

He knew not. Though his life, day after day,
 Was failing like an unreplenished stream,
 Though in his eyes a cloud and burthen lay, 60

Through which his soul, like Vesper's serene beam
 Piercing the chasms of ever rising clouds,
 Shone, softly burning; though his lips did seem

Like reeds which quiver in impetuous floods;
 And through his sleep, and o'er each waking hour, 65
 Thoughts after thoughts, unresting multitudes,

Were driven within him by some secret power,
 Which bade them blaze, and live, and roll afar,
 Like lights and sounds, from haunted tower to tower

O'er castled mountains borne, when tempest's war 70
 Is levied by the night-contending winds,
 And the pale dalesmen watch with eager ear;—

Though such were in his spirit, as the fiends
 Which wake and feed an everliving woe,—
 What was this grief, which ne'er in other minds 75

A mirror found,—he knew not—none could know;
 But on whoe'er might question him he turned
 The light of his frank eyes, as if to show

He knew not of the grief within that burned,
 But asked forbearance with a mournful look;
 Or spoke in words from which none ever learned 80

The cause of his disquietude; or shook
 With spasms of silent passion; or turned pale:
 So that his friends soon rarely undertook

To stir his secret pain without avail ;—
 For all who knew and loved him then perceived
 That there was drawn an adamantine veil

85

Between his heart and mind,—both unrelieved
 Wrought in his brain and bosom separate strife.
 Some said that he was mad, others believed

90

That memories of an antenatal life
 Made this, where now he dwelt, a penal hell ;
 And others said that such mysterious grief

From God's displeasure, like a darkness, fell
 On souls like his, which owned no higher law
 Than love¹; love calm, steadfast, invincible

95

By mortal fear or supernatural awe ;
 And others,—'Tis the shadow of a dream
 Which the veiled eye of Memory never saw,

'But through the soul's abyss, like some dark stream
 Through shattered mines and caverns underground,
 Rolls, shaking its foundations ; and no beam

100

'Of joy may rise, but it is quenched and drowned
 In the dim whirlpools of this dream obscure ;
 Soon its exhausted waters will have found

105

'A lair of rest beneath thy spirit pure,
 O Athanase!—in one so good and great,
 Evil or tumult cannot long endure.'

So spake they: idly of another's state
 Babbling vain words and fond philosophy ;
 This was their consolation ; such debate

110

Men held with one another ; nor did he,
 Like one who labours with a human woe,
 Decline this talk: as if its theme might be

Another, not himself, he to and fro
 Questioned and canvassed it with subtlest wit ;
 And none but those who loved him best could know

115

That which he knew not, how it galled and bit
 His weary mind, this converse vain and cold ;
 For like an eyeless nightmare grief did sit

120

Upon his being ; a snake which fold by fold
 Pressed out the life of life, a clinging fiend
 Which clenched him if he stirred with deadlier hold ;—
 And so his grief remained—let it remain—untold¹.

¹ The Author was pursuing a fuller development of the ideal character of Athanase, when it struck him that in an attempt at extreme refinement and analysis, his conceptions might be betrayed into the assuming a morbid character. The reader will judge whether he is a loser or gainer by the difference.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

PART II

FRAGMENT I

PRINCE ATHANASE had one belovèd friend, 125
 An old, old man, with hair of silver white,
 And lips where heavenly smiles would hang and blend
 With his wise words; and eyes whose arrowy light
 Shone like the reflex of a thousand minds.
 He was the last whom superstition's blight 130
 Had spared in Greece—the blight that cramps and blinds,—
 And in his olive bower at Œnoe
 Had sate from earliest youth. Like one who finds
 A fertile island in the barren sea,
 One mariner who has survived his mates 135
 Many a drear month in a great ship—so he
 With soul-sustaining songs, and sweet debates
 Of ancient lore, there fed his lonely being:—
 'The mind becomes that which it contemplates,'—
 And thus Zonoras, by forever seeing 140
 Their bright creations, grew like wisest men;
 And when he heard the crash of nations fleeing
 A bloodier power than ruled thy ruins then,
 O sacred Hellas! many weary years
 He wandered, till the path of Laian's glen 145
 Was grass-grown—and the unremembered tears
 Were dry in Laian for their honoured chief,
 Who fell in Byzant, pierced by Moslem spears:—
 And as the lady looked with faithful grief
 From her high lattice o'er the rugged path, 150
 Where she once saw that horseman toil, with brief
 And blighting hope, who with the news of death
 Struck body and soul as with a mortal blight,
 She saw between the chestnuts, far beneath,
 An old man toiling up, a weary wight; 155
 And soon within her hospitable hall
 She saw his white hairs glittering in the light
 Of the wood fire, and round his shoulders fall;
 And his wan visage and his withered mien,
 Yet calm and gentle and majestic. 160
 And Athanase, her child, who must have been
 Then three years old, sate opposite and gazed
 In patient silence.

FRAGMENT II

SUCH was Zonoras; and as daylight finds
 One amaranth glittering on the path of frost, 165
 When autumn nights have nipped all weaker kinds,
 Thus through his age, dark, cold, and tempest-tossed,
 Shone truth upon Zonoras; and he filled
 From fountains pure, nigh overgrown and lost,
 The spirit of Prince Athanase, a child, 170
 With soul-sustaining songs of ancient lore
 And philosophic wisdom, clear and mild,
 And sweet and subtle talk they evermore,
 The pupil and the master, shared; until, 175
 Sharing that undiminishable store,
 The youth, as shadows on a grassy hill
 Outrun the winds that chase them, soon outran
 His teacher, and did teach with native skill
 Strange truths and new to that experienced man;
 Still they were friends, as few have ever been 180
 Who mark the extremes of life's discordant span.
 So in the caverns of the forest green,
 Or on the rocks of echoing ocean hoar,
 Zonoras and Prince Athanase were seen
 By summer woodmen; and when winter's roar 185
 Sounded o'er earth and sea its blast of war,
 The Balearic fisher, driven from shore,
 Hanging upon the peaked wave afar,
 Then saw their lamp from Laian's turret gleam,
 Piercing the stormy darkness, like a star 190
 Which pours beyond the sea one steadfast beam,
 Whilst all the constellations of the sky
 Seemed reeling through the storm . . . They did but seem—
 For, lo! the wintry clouds are all gone by,
 And bright Arcturus through yon pines is glowing, 195
 And far o'er southern waves, immovably
 Belted Orion hangs—warm light is flowing
 From the young moon into the sunset's chasm.—
 'O, summer eve! with power divine, bestowing
 'On thine own bird the sweet enthusiasm 200
 Which overflows in notes of liquid gladness,
 Filling the sky like light! How many a spasm

165 One *Bodl. MS. ed. 1839*; An *ed. 1824*. 167 Thus thro' *Bodl. MS. (?)*, *ed. 1839*; Thus
 had *ed. 1824*. 173 talk they *ed. 1824, Bodl. MS.*; talk now *ed. 1839*. 175 that *ed. 1839*;
 the *ed. 1824*. 182 So *ed. 1839*; And *ed. 1824*. 183 Or on *Bodl. MS.*; Or by *edd. 1824*,
 1839. 199 eve *Bodl. MS. ed. 1839*; night *ed. 1824*.

'Of fevered brains, oppressed with grief and madness,
 Were lulled by thee, delightful nightingale,—
 And these soft waves, murmuring a gentle sadness,— 205
 'And the far sighings of yon piny dale
 Made vocal by some wind we feel not here.—
 I bear alone what nothing may avail
 'To lighten—a strange load!'—No human ear
 Heard this lament; but o'er the visage wan 210
 Of Athanase, a ruffling atmosphere
 Of dark emotion, a swift shadow, ran,
 Like wind upon some forest-bosomed lake,
 Glassy and dark.—And that divine old man
 Beheld his mystic friend's whole being shake, 215
 Even where its inmost depths were gloomiest—
 And with a calm and measured voice he spake,
 And, with a soft and equal pressure, pressed
 That cold lean hand:—'Dost thou remember yet
 When the curved moon then lingering in the west 220
 'Paused, in yon waves her mighty horns to wet,
 How in those beams we walked, half resting on the sea?
 'Tis just one year—sure thou dost not forget—
 'Then Plato's words of light in thee and me
 Lingered like moonlight in the moonless east, 225
 For we had just then read—thy memory
 'Is faithful now—the story of the feast;
 And Agathon and Diotima seemed
 From death and dark forgetfulness released '

FRAGMENT III

AND when the old man saw that on the green 230
 Leaves of his opening a blight had lighted
 He said: 'My friend, one grief alone can wean
 A gentle mind from all that once delighted:—
 Thou lovest, and thy secret heart is laden
 With feelings which should not be unrequited.' 235
 And Athanase . . . then smiled, as one o'erladen
 With iron chains might smile to talk (?) of bands
 Twined round her lover's neck by some blithe maiden,
 And said

FRAGMENT IV

'TWAS at the season when the Earth upsprings 240
 From slumber, as a spherèd angel's child,
 Shadowing its eyes with green and golden wings,

212 emotion, a swift *edd.* 1824, 1839; emotion with swift *Bodl. MS.*

Stands up before its mother bright and mild,
 Of whose soft voice the air expectant seems—
 So stood before the sun, which shone and smiled 245
 To see it rise thus joyous from its dreams,
 The fresh and radiant Earth. The hoary grove
 Waxed green—and flowers burst forth like starry beams;—
 The grass in the warm sun did start and move,
 And sea-buds burst under the waves serene:— 250
 How many a one, though none be near to love,
 Loves then the shade of his own soul, half seen
 In any mirror—or the spring's young minions,
 The wingèd leaves amid the copses green;—
 How many a spirit then puts on the pinions 255
 Of fancy, and outstrips the lagging blast,
 And his own steps—and over wide dominions
 Sweeps in his dream-drawn chariot, far and fast,
 More fleet than storms—the wide world shrinks below,
 When winter and despondency are past. 260

FRAGMENT V

'Twas at this season that Prince Athanase
 Passed the white Alps—those eagle-baffling mountains
 Slept in their shrouds of snow;—beside the ways
 The waterfalls were voiceless—for their fountains
 Were changed to mines of sunless crystal now, 265
 Or by the curdling winds—like brazen wings
 Which clanged along the mountain's marble brow—
 Warped into adamantine fretwork, hung
 And filled with frozen light the chasms below.
 Vexed by the blast, the great pines groaned and swung 270
 Under their load of [snow]—

 Such as the eagle sees, when he dives down
 From the gray deserts of wide air, [beheld] 275
 [Prince] Athanase; and o'er his mien (?) was thrown
 The shadow of that scene, field after field,
 Purple and dim and wide

FRAGMENT VI

THOU art the wine whose drunkenness is all
 We can desire, O Love! and happy souls, 280
 Ere from thy vine the leaves of autumn fall,

250 under *ed.* 1824, *Bodl. MS.*; beneath *ed.* 1839. 256 outstrips *edd.* 1824, 1839;
 outrides *Bodl. MS.* 262 mountains *edd.* 1824, 1839; crags *Bodl. MS.* 264 fountains
edd. 1824, 1839; springs *Bodl. MS.* 269 chasms *Bodl. MS.*; chasin *edd.* 1824, 1839.

Catch thee, and feed from their o'erflowing bowls
Thousands who thirst for thine ambrosial dew;—
Thou art the radiance which where ocean rolls

Investeth it; and when the heavens are blue 285
Thou fillest them; and when the earth is fair
The shadow of thy moving wings imbue

Its deserts and its mountains, till they wear
Beauty like some light robe;—thou ever soarest 290
Among the towers of men, and as soft air

In spring, which moves the unawakened forest,
Clothing with leaves its branches bare and bleak,
Thou floatest among men; and aye implorest

That which from thee they should implore:—the weak
Alone kneel to thee, offering up the hearts 295
The strong have broken—yet where shall any seek

A garment whom thou clothest not? the darts
Of the keen winter storm, barbèd with frost,
Which, from the everlasting snow that parts

The Alps from Heaven, pierce some traveller lost 300
In the wide waved interminable snow
Ungarmented,

ANOTHER FRAGMENT (A)

YES, often when the eyes are cold and dry,
And the lips calm, the Spirit weeps within
Tears bitterer than the blood of agony 305

Trembling in drops on the discoloured skin
Of those who love their kind and therefore perish
In ghastly torture—a sweet medicine

Of peace and sleep are tears, and quietly
Them soothe from whose uplifted eyes they fall 310
But

ANOTHER FRAGMENT (B)

HER hair was brown, her spherèd eyes were brown,
And in their dark and liquid moisture swam,
Like the dim orb of the eclipsèd moon;

Yet when the spirit flashed beneath, there came 315
The light from them, as when tears of delight
Double the western planet's serene flame.

283 thine *Bodl. MS.*; thy *edd.* 1824, 1839. 285 Investeth *Bodl. MS.*; Investest *edd.* 1824, 1839. 289 light *Bodl. MS.*; bright *edd.* 1824, 1839.

ROSALIND AND HELEN

A MODERN ECLOGUE

[Begun at Marlow, 1817 (summer); already in the press, March, 1818; finished at the Baths of Lucca, August, 1818; published with other poems, as the title-piece of a slender volume, by C. & J. Ollier, London, 1819 (spring). See *Bibliographical List*. Sources of the text are (1) *editio princeps*, 1819; (2) *Poetical Works*, ed. Mrs. Shelley, 1839, edd. 1st and 2nd. A fragment of the text is amongst the Boscombe MSS. The poem is reprinted here from the *editio princeps*; verbal alterations are recorded in the footnotes, punctual in the Editor's Notes at the end of this volume.]

ADVERTISEMENT

THE story of *Rosalind and Helen* is, undoubtedly, not an attempt in the highest style of poetry. It is in no degree calculated to excite profound meditation; and if, by interesting the affections and amusing the imagination, it awakens a certain ideal melancholy favourable to the reception of more important impressions, it will produce in the reader all that the writer experienced in the composition. I resigned myself, as I wrote, to the impulse of the feelings which moulded the conception of the story; and this impulse determined the pauses of a measure, which only pretends to be regular inasmuch as it corresponds with, and expresses, the irregularity of the imaginations which inspired it.

I do not know which of the few scattered poems I left in England will be selected by my bookseller to add to this collection. One¹, which I sent from Italy, was written after a day's excursion among those lovely mountains which surround what was once the retreat, and where is now the sepulchre, of Petrarch. If any one is inclined to condemn the insertion of the introductory lines, which image forth the sudden relief of a state of deep despondency by the radiant visions disclosed by the sudden burst of an Italian sunrise in autumn on the highest peak of those delightful mountains, I can only offer as my excuse, that they were not erased at the request of a dear friend, with whom added years of intercourse only add to my apprehension of its value, and who would have had more right than any one to complain, that she has not been able to extinguish in me the very power of delineating sadness.

NAPLES, Dec. 20, 1818.

ROSALIND, HELEN AND HER CHILD

SCENE. *The Shore of the Lake of Como*

<p><i>Helen.</i> Come hither, my sweet <i>Rosalind.</i> 'Tis long since thou and I have met; And yet methinks it were unkind Those moments to forget. Come sit by me. I see thee stand By this lone lake, in this far land, Thy loose hair in the light wind flying, Thysweet voice to each tone of even United, and thine eyes replying</p>	<p>To the hues of yon fair heaven. 10 Come, gentle friend: wilt sit by me? And be as thou wert wont to be Ere we were disunited? None doth behold us now: the power That led us forth at this lone hour Will be but ill requited 16 If thou depart in scorn: oh! come, And talk of our abandoned home. Remember, this is Italy,</p>
--	---

¹ 'Lines written among the Euganean Hills.'—ED.

And we are exiles. Talk with me 20
Of that our land, whose wilds and
floods,

Barren and dark although they be,
Were dearer than these chestnut
woods:

Those heathy paths, that inland
stream,

And the blue mountains, shapes
which seem 25

Like wrecks of childhood's sunny
dream:

Which that we have abandoned
now,

Weighs on the heart like that re-
morse

Which altered friendship leaves. I
seek 29

No more our youthful intercourse.
That cannot be! Rosalind, speak.

Speak to me. Leave me not.—
When morn did come,

When evening fell upon our com-
mon home,

When for one hour we parted,—do
not frown:

I would not chide thee, though thy
faith is broken: 35

But turn to me. Oh! by this cher-
ished token,

Of woven hair, which thou wilt not
disown,

Turn, as 'twere but the memory of
me,

And not my scornèd self who
prayed to thee.

Rosalind. Is it a dream, or do I
see 40

And hear frail Helen? I would flee
Thy tainting touch; but former
years

Arise, and bring forbidden tears;
And my o'erburthened memory
Seeks yet its lost repose in thee. 45

I share thy crime. I cannot choose
But weep for thee: mine own
strange grief

But seldom stoops to such relief:
Nor ever did I love thee less,

Though mourning o'er thy wicked-
ness 50

Even with a sister's woe. I knew
What to the evil world is due,

And therefore sternly did refuse
To link me with the infamy

Of one so lost as Helen. Now 55
Bewildered by my dire despair,

Wondering I blush, and weep that
thou

Should'st love me still,—thou only!
—There,

Let us sit on that gray stone,
Till our mournful talk be done. 60

Helen. Alas! not there; I can-
not bear

The murmur of this lake to hear.
A sound from there, Rosalind dear,

Which never yet I heard elsewhere
But in our native land, recurs, 65

Even here where now we meet. It
stirs

Too much of suffocating sorrow!
In the dell of yon dark chestnut

wood
Is a stone seat, a solitude

Less like our own. The ghost of
Peace 70

Will not desert this spot. To-
morrow,

If thy kind feelings should not
cease,

We may sit here.
Rosalind. Thou lead, my sweet,

And I will follow.
Henry. 'Tis Fenici's seat

Where you are going? This is not
the way, 75

Mamma; it leads behind those
trees that grow

Close to the little river.
Helen. Yes: I know:

I was bewildered. Kiss me, and be
gay,

Dear boy: why do you sob?
Henry. I do not know:

But it might break any one's heart
to see 80

You and the lady cry so bitterly.

Helen. It is a gentle child, my friend. Go home,
Henry, and play with Lilla till I come.
We only cried with joy to see each other;
We are quite merry now: Good-night.

The boy 85
Lifted a sudden look upon his mother,
And in the gleam of forced and hollow joy
Which lightened 'o'er her face, laughed with the glee
Of light and unsuspecting infancy,
And whispered in her ear, 'Bring home with you 90
That sweet strange lady-friend.'
Then off he flew,
But stopped, and beckoned with a meaning smile,
Where the road turned. Pale Rosalind the while,
Hiding her face, stood weeping silently.

In silence then they took the way
Beneath the forest's solitude. 96
It was a vast and antique wood,
Thro' which they took their way;
And the gray shades of evening
O'er that green wilderness did fling 100
Still deeper solitude.
Pursuing still the path that wound
The vast and knotted trees around
Through which slow shades were wandering,
To a deep lawny dell they came, 105
To a stone seat beside a spring,
O'er which the columned wood did frame
A roofless temple, like the fane
Where, ere new creeds could faith obtain,
Man's early race once knelt beneath 110
The overhanging deity.

O'er this fair fountain hung the sky,
Now spangled with rare stars. The snake,
The pale snake, that with eager breath
Creeps here his noontide thirst to slake, 115
Is beaming with many a mingled hue,
Shed from yon dome's eternal blue,
When he floats on that dark and lucid flood
In the light of his own loveliness;
And the birds that in the fountain dip 120
Their plumes, with fearless fellowship
Above and round him wheel and hover.
The fitful wind is heard to stir
One solitary leaf on high;
The chirping of the grasshopper 125
Fills every pause. There is emotion
In all that dwells at noontide here:
Then, through the intricate wild wood,
A maze of life and light and motion
Is woven. But there is stillness now: 130
Gloom, and the trance of Nature now:
The snake is in his cave asleep;
The birds are on the branches dreaming:
Only the shadows creep: 134
Only the glow-worm is gleaming:
Only the owls and the nightingales
Wake in this dell when daylight fails,
And gray shades gather in the woods:
And the owls have all fled far away
In a merrier glen to hoot and play, 140
For the moon is veiled and sleeping now.
The accustomed nightingale still broods
On her accustomed bough,

But she is mute ; for her false mate
Has fled and left her desolate. 145

This silent spot tradition old
Had peopled with the spectral dead.
For the roots of the speaker's hair
felt cold

And stiff, as with tremulous lips he
told

That a hellish shape at midnight
led 150

The ghost of a youth with hoary
hair,

And sate on the seat beside him
there,

Till a naked child came wandering
by,

When the fiend would change to a
lady fair!

A fearful tale! The truth was
worse: 155

For here a sister and a brother
Had solemnized a monstrous curse,
Meeting in this fair solitude:

For beneath yon very sky,
Had they resigned to one an-

other 160
Body and soul. The multitude:

Tracking them to the secret wood,
Tore limb from limb their innocent

child,
And stabbed and trampled on its

mother ;
But the youth, for God's most holy

grace, 165
A priest saved to burn in the

market-place.

Duly at evening Helen came
To this lone silent spot,

From the wrecks of a tale of wilder
sorrow

So much of sympathy to borrow 170
As soothed her own dark lot.

Duly each evening from her home,
With her fair child would Helen

come
To sit upon that antique seat,

While the hues of day were
pale; 175

And the bright boy beside her feet

Now lay, lifting at intervals
His broad blue eyes on her ;
Now, where some sudden impulse
calls

Following. He was a gentle boy 180
And in all gentle sports took joy ;

Of in a dry leaf for a boat,
With a small feather for a sail,

His fancy on that spring would
float, 184

If some invisible breeze might stir
Its marble calm: and Helen smiled

Through tears of awe on the gay
child,

To think that a boy as fair as he,
In years which never more may be,

By that same fount, in that same
wood, 190

The like sweet fancies had pursued ;
And that a mother, lost like her,

Had mournfully sate watching him.
Then all the scene was wont to

swim
Through the mist of a burning

tear. 195

For many months had Helen
known

This scene; and now she thither
turned

Her footsteps, not alone.
The friend whose falsehood she had

mourned,
Sate with her on that seat of

stone. 200
Silent they sate; for evening,

And the power its glimpses bring
Had, with one awful shadow,

quelled
The passion of their grief. They

sate
With linkèd hands, for unre-

pelled 205
Had Helen taken Rosalind's.

Like the autumn wind, when it un-

binds
The tangled locks of the night-

shade's hair,
Which is twined in the sultry

summer air

Round the walls of an outworn
sepulchre, 210

Did the voice of Helen, sad and
sweet,

And the sound of her heart that
ever beat,

As with sighs and words she
breathed on her,

Unbind the knots of her friend's
despair,

Till her thoughts were free to float
and flow; 215

And from her labouring bosom now,
Like the bursting of a prisoned
flame,

The voice of a long pent sorrow
came.

Rosalind. I saw the dark earth
fall upon

The coffin; and I saw the stone 220
Laid over him whom this cold
breast

Had pillowed to his nightly rest!
Thou knowest not, thou canst not
know

My agony. Oh! I could not weep:
The sources whence such blessings
flow 225

Were not to be approached by me!
But I could smile, and I could
sleep,

Though with a self-accusing heart.
In morning's light, in evening's
gloom,

I watched,—and would not thence
depart— 230

My husband's unlamented tomb.
My children knew their sire was
gone,

But when I told them,—‘he is
dead,’—

They laughed aloud in frantic glee,
They clapped their hands and
leaped about, 235

Answering each other's ecstasy
With many a prank and merry
shout.

But I sate silent and alone,
Wrapped in the mock of mourning
weed.

They laughed, for he was dead:
but I 240

Sate with a hard and tearless eye,
And with a heart which would
deny

The secret joy it could not quell,
Low muttering o'er his loathed
name;

Till from that self-contention
came 245

Remorse where sin was none; a hell
Which in pure spirits should not
dwell.

I'll tell thee truth. He was a man
Hard, selfish, loving only gold,
Yet full of guile: his pale eyes ran 250
With tears, which each some false-
hood told,

And oft his smooth and bridled
tongue

Would give the lie to his flushing
cheek:

He was a coward to the strong:
He was a tyrant to the weak, 255
On whom his vengeance he would
wreak:

For scorn, whose arrows search the
heart,

From many a stranger's eye would
dart,

And on his memory cling, and
follow

His soul to its home so cold and
hollow. 260

He was a tyrant to the weak,
And we were such, alas the day!
Oft, when my little ones at play,
Were in youth's natural lightness
gay,

Or if they listened to some tale 265
Of travellers, or of fairy land,—

When the light from the wood-
fire's dying brand

Flashed on their faces,—if they
heard

Or thought they heard upon the
stair 269

His footstep, the suspended word
Died on my lips: we all grew pale:

The babe at my bosom was hushed
with fear
If it thought it heard its father near;
And my two wild boys would near
my knee
Cling, cowed and cowering fear-
fully. 275

I'll tell thee truth: I loved another.
His name in my ear was ever
ringing,
His form to my brain was ever
clinging:

Yet if some stranger breathed that
name,

My lips turned white, and my
heart beat fast: 280

My nights were once haunted by
dreams of flame,

My days were dim in the shadow
cast

By the memory of the same!

Day and night, day and night,
He was my breath and life and
light, 285

For three short years, which soon
were passed.

On the fourth, my gentle mother
Led me to the shrine, to be
His sworn bride eternally.

And now we stood on the altar
stair, 290

When my father came from a dis-
tant land,

And with a loud and fearful cry
Rushed between us suddenly.

I saw the stream of his thin gray
hair,

I saw his lean and lifted hand, 295
And heard his words,—and live!

Oh God!

Wherefore do I live?—'Hold,
hold!'

He cried,—'I tell thee 'tis her
brother!

Thy mother, boy, beneath the sod
Of yon churchyard rests in her
shroud so cold: 300

I am now weak, and pale, and old:
We were once dear to one another,

I and that corpse! Thou art our
child!'

Then with a laugh both long and
wild

The youth upon the pavement fell:
They found him dead! All looked
on me, 306

The spasms of my despair to see:

But I was calm. I went away:

I was clammy-cold like clay!

I did not weep: I did not speak: 310

But day by day, week after week,

I walked about like a corpse alive!

Alas! sweet friend, you must be-
lieve

This heart is stone: it did not
break.

My father lived a little while, 315

But all might see that he was dying,

He smiled with such a woeful smile!

When he was in the churchyard
lying

Among the worms, we grew quite
poor,

So that no one would give us
bread: 320

My mother looked at me, and said

Faint words of cheer, which only
meant

That she could die and be content;

So I went forth from the same
church door

To another husband's bed. 325

And this was he who died at last,

When weeks and months and years
had passed,

Through which I firmly did fulfil

My duties, a devoted wife,

With the stern step of vanquished
will, 330

Walking beneath the night of life,

Whose hours extinguished, like
slow rain

Falling for ever, pain by pain,

The very hope of death's dear rest;

Which, since the heart within my
breast 335

Of natural life was dispossessed,

Its strange sustainer there had
been.

When flowers were dead, and grass
was green

Upon my mother's grave,—that
mother

Whom to outlive, and cheer, and
make 340

My wan eyes glitter for her sake,
Was my vowed task, the single care
Which once gave life to my
despair,—

When she was a thing that did not
stir

And the crawling worms were
cradling her 345

To a sleep more deep and so more
sweet

Than a baby's rocked on its nurse's
knee,

I lived: a living pulse then beat
Beneath my heart that awakened
me.

What was this pulse so warm and
free? 350

Alas! I knew it could not be
My own dull blood: 'twas like a
thought

Of liquid love, that spread and
wrought

Under my bosom and in my brain,
And crept with the blood through
every vein; 355

And hour by hour, day after day,
The wonder could not charm away,
But laid in sleep, my wakeful pain,
Until I knew it was a child,
And then I wept. For long, long
years 360

These frozen eyes had shed no
tears:

But now—'twas the season fair
and mild

When April has wept itself to May:
I sate through the sweet sunny day
By my window bowered round
with leaves, 365

And down my cheeks the quick
tears fell

Like twinkling rain-drops from the
eaves,

When warm spring showers are
passing o'er:

O Helen, none can ever tell

The joy it was to weep once
more! 370

I wept to think how hard it were
To kill my babe, and take from it
The sense of light, and the warm
air,

And my own fond and tender care,
And love and smiles; ere I knew
yet 375

That these for it might, as for me,
Be the masks of a grinning
mockery.

And haply, I would dream, 'twere
sweet

To feed it from my faded breast,
Or mark my own heart's restless
beat 380

Rock it to its untroubled rest,
And watch the growing soul be-
neath

Dawn in faint smiles; and hear its
breath,

Half interrupted by calm sighs,
And search the depth of its fair
eyes 385

For long departed memories!
And so I lived till that sweet load
Was lightened. Darkly forward
flowed

The stream of years, and on it bore
Two shapes of gladness to my
sight; 390

Two other babes, delightful more
In my lost soul's abandoned night,
Than their own country ships may
be

Sailing towards wrecked mariners,
Who cling to the rock of a wintry
sea. 395

For each, as it came, brought
soothing tears,

And a loosening warmth, as each
one lay

Sucking the sullen milk away
About my frozen heart, did play,

And weaned it, oh how painfully!—⁴⁰⁰

As they themselves were weaned each one

From that sweet food,—even from the thirst

Of death, and nothingness, and rest, Strange inmate of a living breast!

Which all that I had undergone⁴⁰⁵ Of grief and shame, since she, who first

The gates of that dark refuge closed,

Came to my sight, and almost burst The seal of that Lethean spring;

But these fair shadows interposed:⁴¹⁰

For all delights are shadows now! And from my brain to my dull brow

The heavy tears gather and flow: I cannot speak: Oh let me weep!

The tears which fell from her wan eyes⁴¹⁵

Glimmered among the moonlight dew:

Her deep hard sobs and heavy sighs

Their echoes in the darkness threw. When she grew calm, she thus did keep

The tenor of her tale:

He died:⁴²⁰

I know not how: he was not old, If age be numbered by its years:

But he was bowed and bent with fears,

Pale with the quenchless thirst of gold,

Which, like fierce fever, left him weak;⁴²⁵

And his strait lip and bloated cheek

Were warped in spasms by hollow sneers;

And selfish cares with barren plough,

Not age, had lined his narrow brow,

And foul and cruel thoughts, which feed⁴³⁰

Upon the withering life within, Like vipers on some poisonous weed.

Whether his ill were death or sin None knew, until he died indeed,

And then men owned they were the same.⁴³⁵

Seven days within my chamber lay That corse, and my babes made holiday:

At last, I told them what is death: The eldest, with a kind of shame,

Came to my knees with silent breath,⁴⁴⁰

And sate awe-stricken at my feet; And soon the others left their play,

And sate there too. It is unmeet To shed on the brief flower of youth

The withering knowledge of the grave;⁴⁴⁵

From me remorse then wrung that truth.

I could not bear the joy which gave Too just a response to mine own.

In vain. I dared not feign a groan; And in their artless looks I saw,⁴⁵⁰

Between the mists of fear and awe, That my own thought was theirs;

and they Expressed it not in words, but said,

Each in its heart, how every day Will pass in happy work and play,⁴⁵⁵

Now he is dead and gone away.

After the funeral all our kin Assembled, and the will was read.

My friend, I tell thee, even the dead

Have strength, their putrid shrouds within,⁴⁶⁰

To blast and torture. Those who live

Still fear the living, but a corse Is merciless, and power doth give

To such pale tyrants half the spoil
 He rends from those who groan
 and toil, 465
 Because they blush not with
 remorse
 Among their crawling worms. Be-
 hold,
 I have no child! my tale grows old
 With grief, and staggers: let it reach
 The limits of my feeble speech, 470
 And languidly at length recline
 On the brink of its own grave and
 mine.

Thou knowest what a thing is
 Poverty
 Among the fallen on evil days:
 'Tis Crime, and Fear, and In-
 famy, 475
 And houseless Want in frozen ways
 Wandering ungarmented, and
 Pain,
 And, worse than all, that inward
 stain
 Foul Self-contempt, which drowns
 in sneers
 Youth's starlight smile, and makes
 its tears 480
 First like hot gall, then dry for
 ever!
 And well thou knowest a mother
 never
 Could doom her children to this ill,
 And well he knew the same. The
 will
 Imported, that if e'er again 485
 I sought my children to behold,
 Or in my birthplace did remain
 Beyond three days, whose hours
 were told,
 They should inherit nought: and
 he,
 To whom next came their patri-
 mony, 490
 A sallow lawyer, cruel and cold,
 Aye watched me, as the will was
 read,
 With eyes askance, which sought
 to see
 The secrets of my agony;

And with close lips and anxious
 brow 495
 Stood canvassing still to and fro
 The chance of my resolve, and all
 The dead man's caution just did
 call;
 For in that killing lie 'twas said—
 'She is adulterous, and doth
 hold 500
 In secret that the Christian creed
 Is false, and therefore is much need
 That I should have a care to save
 My children from eternal fire.'
 Friend, he was sheltered by the
 grave, 505
 And therefore dared to be a liar!
 In truth, the Indian on the pyre
 Of her dead husband, half con-
 sumed,
 As well might there be false, as I
 To those abhorred embraces
 doomed, 510
 Far worse than fire's brief agony.
 As to the Christian creed, if true
 Or false, I never questioned it:
 I took it as the vulgar do:
 Nor my vexed soul had leisure
 yet 515
 To doubt the things men say, or
 deem
 That they are other than they
 seem.
 All present who those crimes did
 hear,
 In feigned or actual scorn and fear,
 Men, women, children, slunk
 away, 520
 Whispering with self-contented
 pride,
 Which half suspects its own base
 lie.
 I spoke to none, nor did abide,
 But silently I went my way,
 Nor noticed I where joyously 525
 Sate my two younger babes at play,
 In the court-yard through which
 I passed;
 But went with footsteps firm and
 fast

Till I came to the brink of the
ocean green,
And there, a woman with gray
hairs, 530
Who had my mother's servant
been,
Kneeling, with many tears and
prayers,
Made me accept a purse of gold,
Half of the earnings she had kept
To refuge her when weak and
old. 535

With woe, which never sleeps or
slept,
I wander now. 'Tis a vain
thought—

But on yon alp, whose snowy head
'Mid the azure air is islanded,
(We see it o'er the flood of cloud, 540
Which sunrise from its eastern
caves

Drives, wrinkling into golden
waves,

Hung with its precipices proud,
From that gray stone where first
we met)

There—now who knows the dead
feel nought?— 545

Should be my grave; for he who
yet

Is my soul's soul, once said:
"Twere sweet

'Mid stars and lightnings to abide,
And winds and lulling snows, that
beat

With their soft flakes the mountain
wide, 550

Where weary meteor lamps repose,
And languid storms their pinions
close:

And all things strong and bright
and pure,

And ever during, aye endure:
Who knows, if one were buried
there, 555

But these things might our spirits
make,

Amid the all-surrounding air,

Their own eternity partake?'
Then 'twas a wild and playful
saying

At which I laughed, or seemed to
laugh: 560

They were his words: now heed
my praying,

And let them be my epitaph.
Thy memory for a term may be

My monument. Wilt remember me?
I know thou wilt, and canst for-
give 565

Whilst in this erring world to live
My soul disdained not, that I
thought

Its lying forms were worthy aught
And much less thee.

Helen. O speak not so,
But come to me and pour thy woe 570

Into this heart, full though it be,
Ay, overflowing with its own:

I thought that grief had severed me
From all beside who weep and
groan;

Its likeness upon earth to be, 575
Its express image; but thou art
More wretched. Sweet! we will
not part

Henceforth, if death be not divi-
sion;

If so, the dead feel no contrition.
But wilt thou hear since last we
parted 580

All that has left me broken
hearted?

Rosalind. Yes, speak. The faint-
est stars are scarcely shorn

Of their thin beams by that delu-
sive morn

Which sinks again in darkness, like
the light

Of early love, soon lost in total
night. 585

Helen. Alas! Italian winds are
mild,

But my bosom is cold—wintry
cold—

When the warm air weaves, among
the fresh leaves,

Soft music, my poor brain is wild,
And I am weak like a nursling
child, 590

Though my soul with grief is gray
and old.

Rosalind. Weep not at thine
own words, though they must
make

Me weep. What is thy tale?

Helen. I fear 'twill shake
Thy gentle heart with tears. Thou
well

Rememberest when we met no
more, 595

And, though I dwelt with Lionel,
That friendless caution pierced me
sore

With grief; a wound my spirit bore
Indignantly, but when he died
With him lay dead both hope and
pride. 600

Alas! all hope is buried now.
But then men dreamed the aged
earth

Was labouring in that mighty
birth,

Which many a poet and a sage
Has aye foreseen—the happy
age 605

When truth and love shall dwell
below

Among the works and ways of
men;

Which on this world not power but
will

Even now is wanting to fulfil.

Among mankind what thence be-
fell 610

Of strife, how vain, is known too
well;

When Liberty's dear paean fell
'Mid murderous howls. To Lionel,
Though of great wealth and lineage
high,

Yet through those dungeon walls
there came 615

Thy thrilling light, O Liberty!
And as the meteor's midnight
flame

Startles the dreamer, sun-like
truth

Flashed on his visionary youth,
And filled him, not with love, but
faith, 620

And hope, and courage mute in
death;

For love and life in him were
twins,

Born at one birth: in every other
First life then love its course begins,
Though they be children of one
mother; 625

And so through this dark world
they fleet

Divided, till in death they meet:
But he loved all things ever. Then
He passed amid the strife of men,
And stood at the throne of armed
power 630

Pleading for a world of woe:
Secure as one on a rock-built
tower

O'er the wrecks which the surge
trails to and fro,

'Mid the passions wild of human
kind

He stood, like a spirit calming
them; 635

For, it was said, his words could
bind

Like music the lulled crowd, and
stem

That torrent of unquiet dream,
Which mortals truth and reason
deem,

But is revenge and fear and
pride. 640

Joyous he was; and hope and
peace

On all who heard him did abide,
Raining like dew from his sweet
talk,

As where the evening star may
walk

Along the brink of the gloomy
seas, 645

Liquid mists of splendour quiver.
His very gestures touched to tears
The unpersuaded tyrant, never

So moved before: his presence
 stung
 The torturers with their victim's
 pain, 650
 And none knew how; and through
 their ears,
 The subtle witchcraft of his tongue
 Unlocked the hearts of those who
 keep
 Gold, the world's bond of slavery.
 Men wondered, and some sneered
 to see 655
 One sow what he could never reap:
 For he is rich, they said, and young,
 And might drink from the depths
 of luxury.
 If he seeks Fame, Fame never
 crowned
 The champion of a trampled creed:
 If he seeks Power, Power is en-
 throned 661
 'Mid ancient rights and wrongs, to
 feed
 Which hungry wolves with praise
 and spoil,
 Those who would sit near Power
 must toil;
 And such, there sitting, all may
 see. 665
 What seeks he? All that others seek
 He casts away, like a vile weed
 Which the sea casts unreturningly.
 That poor and hungry men should
 break
 The laws which wreak them toil
 and scorn, 670
 We understand; but Lionel
 We know is rich and nobly born.
 Sowedondered they: yet all men loved
 Young Lionel, though few ap-
 proved;
 All but the priests, whose hatred
 fell 675
 Like the unseen blight of a smiling
 day,
 The withering honey dew, which
 clings
 Under the bright green buds of May,
 Whilst they unfold their emerald
 wings:

For he made verses wild and queer
 On the strange creeds priests hold
 so dear, 681
 Because they bring them land and
 gold.
 Of devils and saints and all such
 gear,
 He made tales which whoso heard
 or read
 Would laugh till he were almost
 dead. 685
 So this grew a proverb: 'Don't
 get old
 Till Lionel's "Banquet in Hell"
 you hear,
 And then you will laugh yourself
 young again.'
 So the priests hated him, and he
 Repaid their hate with cheerful
 glee. 690
 Ah, smiles and joyance quickly
 died,
 For public hope grew pale and dim
 In an altered time and tide,
 And in its wasting withered him,
 As a summer flower that blows too
 soon 695
 Droops in the smile of the waning
 moon,
 When it scatters through an April
 night
 The frozen dews of wrinkling
 blight.
 None now hoped more. Gray
 Power was seated
 Safely on her ancestral throne; 700
 And Faith, the Python, un-
 defeated,
 Even to its blood-stained steps
 dragged on
 Her foul and wounded train, and
 men
 Were trampled and deceived again,
 And words and shows again could
 bind 705
 The wailing tribes of human kind
 In scorn and famine. Fire and
 blood
 Raged round the raging multitude,

To fields remote by tyrants sent
 To be the scornèd instrument 710
 With which they drag from mines
 of gore
 The chains their slaves yet ever
 wore:
 And in the streets men met each
 other,
 And by old altars and in halls,
 And smiled again at festivals. 715
 But each man found in his heart's
 brother
 Cold cheer; for all, though half de-
 ceived,
 The outworn creeds again believed,
 And the same round anew began,
 Which the weary world yet ever
 ran. 720
 Many then wept, not tears, but
 gall
 Within their hearts, like drops
 which fall
 Wasting the fountain-stone away.
 And in that dark and evil day
 Did all desires and thoughts, that
 claim 725
 Men's care—ambition, friendship,
 fame,
 Love, hope, though hope was now
 despair—
 Indue the colours of this change,
 As from the all-surrounding air
 The earth takes hues obscure and
 strange, 730
 When storm and earthquake lin-
 ger there.
 And so, my friend, it then befell
 To many, most to Lionel,
 Whose hope was like the life of
 youth
 Within him, and when dead, be-
 came 735
 A spirit of unresting flame,
 Which goaded him in his distress
 Over the world's vast wilderness.
 Three years he left his native land,
 And on the fourth, when he re-
 turned, 740

None knew him: he was stricken
 deep
 With some disease of mind, and
 turned
 Into aught unlike Lionel.
 On him, on whom, did he pause
 in sleep, 744
 Serenest smiles were wont to keep,
 And, did he wake, a wingèd band
 Of bright persuasions, which had
 fed
 On his sweet lips and liquid eyes,
 Kept their swift pinions half out-
 spread,
 To do on men his least command; 750
 On him, whom once 'twas paradise
 Even to behold, now misery lay:
 In his own heart 'twas merciless,
 To all things else none may express
 Its innocence and tenderness. 755
 'Twas said that he had refuge
 sought
 In love from his unquiet thought
 In distant lands, and been de-
 ceived
 By some strange show; for there
 were found, 759
 Blotted with tears as those relieved
 By their own words are wont to do,
 These mournful verses on the
 ground,
 By all who read them blotted too.
 'How am I changed! my hopes
 were once like fire:
 I loved, and I believed that life
 was love. 765
 How am I lost! on wings of swift
 desire
 Among Heaven's winds my spirit
 once did move.
 I slept, and silver dreams did aye
 inspire
 My liquid sleep: I woke, and did
 approve
 All nature to my heart, and
 thought to make 770
 A paradise of earth for one sweet
 sake.

'I love, but I believe in love no more.
 I feel desire, but hope not. O, from sleep
 Most vainly must my weary brain implore
 Its long lost flattery now: I wake to weep, 775
 And sit through the long day gnawing the core
 Of my bitter heart, and, like a miser, keep,
 Since none in what I feel take pain or pleasure,
 To my own soul its self-consuming treasure.'

He dwelt beside me near the sea: 780
 And oft in evening did we meet,
 When the waves, beneath the star-light, flee
 O'er the yellow sands with silver feet,
 And talked: our talk was sad and sweet,
 Till slowly from his mien there passed 785
 The desolation which it spoke;
 And smiles,—as when the lightning's blast
 Has parched some heaven-delighting oak,
 The next spring shows leaves pale and rare, 789
 But like flowers delicate and fair,
 On its rent boughs,—again arrayed
 His countenance in tender light:
 His words grew subtle fire, which made
 The air his hearers breathed delight:
 His motions, like the winds, were free, 795
 Which bend the bright grass gracefully,
 Then fade away in circlets faint:
 And wingèd Hope, on which upborne
 His soul seemed hovering in his eyes,
 Like some bright spirit newly born

Floating amid the sunny skies, 801
 Sprang forth from his rent heart anew.
 Yet o'er his talk, and looks, and mien,
 Tempering their loveliness too keen,
 Past woe its shadow backward threw, 805
 Till like an exhalation, spread
 From flowers half drunk with evening dew,
 They did become infectious: sweet
 And subtle mists of sense and thought:
 Which wrapped us soon, when we might meet, 810
 Almost from our own looks and aught
 The wide world holds. And so, his mind
 Was healed, while mine grew sick with fear:
 For ever now his health declined,
 Like some frail bark which cannot bear 815
 The impulse of an altered wind,
 Though prosperous: and my heart grew full
 'Mid its new joy of a new care:
 For his cheek became, not pale, but fair,
 As rose-o'er shadowed lilies are; 820
 And soon his deep and sunny hair,
 In this alone less beautiful,
 Like grass in tombs grew wild and rare.
 The blood in his translucent veins
 Beat, not like animal life, but love
 Seemed now its sullen springs to move, 826
 When life had failed, and all its pains:
 And sudden sleep would seize him oft
 Like death, so calm, but that a tear,
 His pointed eyelashes between, 830
 Would gather in the light serene
 Of smiles, whose lustre bright and soft
 Beneath lay undulating there.

His breath was like inconstant
 flame,
 As eagerly it went and came; 835
 And I hung o'er him in his sleep,
 Till, like an image in the lake
 Which rains disturb, my tears
 would break
 The shadow of that slumber deep:
 Then he would bid me not to
 weep, 840
 And say with flattery false, yet
 sweet,
 That death and he could never
 meet,
 If I would never part with him.
 And so we loved, and did unite
 All that in us was yet divided: 845
 For when he said, that many a rite,
 By men to bind but once provided,
 Could not be shared by him and me,
 Or they would kill him in their
 glee,
 I shuddered, and then laughing
 said— 850
 'We will have rites our faith to
 bind,
 But our church shall be the starry
 night,
 Our altar the grassy earth out-
 spread,
 And our priest the muttering
 wind.'

'Twas sunset as I spoke: one star
 Had scarce burst forth, when
 from afar 856
 The ministers of misrule sent,
 Seized upon Lionel, and bore
 His chained limbs to a dreary
 tower,
 In the midst of a city vast and wide.
 For he, they said, from his mind
 had bent 861
 Against their gods keen blasphemy,
 For which, though his soul must
 roasted be
 In hell's red lakes immortally,
 Yet even on earth must he abide
 The vengeance of their slaves: a
 trial, 866

I think, men call it. What avail
 Are prayers and tears, which chase
 denial
 From the fierce savage, nursed in
 hate?
 What the knit soul that pleading
 and pale 870
 Makes wan the quivering cheek,
 which late
 It painted with its own delight?
 We were divided. As I could,
 I stilled the tingling of my blood,
 And followed him in their despite,
 As a widow follows, pale and wild,
 The murderers and corpse of her
 only child; 877
 And when we came to the prison
 door
 And I prayed to share his dungeon
 floor
 With prayers which rarely have
 been spurned, 880
 And when men drove me forth
 and I
 Stared with blank frenzy on the
 sky,
 A farewell look of love he turned,
 Half calming me; then gazed
 awhile,
 As if thro' that black and massy
 pile, 885
 And thro' the crowd around him
 there,
 And thro' the dense and murky air,
 And the thronged streets, he did
 espy
 What poets know and prophesy;
 And said, with voice that made
 them shiver 890
 And clung like music in my brain,
 And which the mute walls spoke
 again
 Prolonging it with deepened strain:
 'Fear not the tyrants shall rule for
 ever,
 Or the priests of the bloody faith; 895
 They stand on the brink of that
 mighty river,
 Whose waves they have tainted
 with death:

It is fed from the depths of a thousand dells,
 Around them it foams, and rages, and swells,
 And their swords and their sceptres I floating see, 900
 Like wrecks in the surge of eternity.'

I dwelt beside the prison gate,
 And the strange crowd that out and in
 Passed, some, no doubt, with mine own fate,
 Might have fretted me with its ceaseless din, 905
 But the fever of care was louder within.
 Soon, but too late, in penitence
 Or fear, his foes released him thence:

I saw his thin and languid form,
 As leaning on the jailor's arm, 910
 Whose hardened eyes grew moist the while,
 To meet his mute and faded smile,
 And hear his words of kind farewell,
 He tottered forth from his damp cell.

Many had never wept before, 915
 From whom fast tears then gushed and fell:

Many will relent no more,
 Who sobbed like infants then: aye, all

Who thronged the prison's stony hall,

The rulers or the slaves of law, 920
 Felt with a new surprise and awe
 That they were human, till strong shame

Made them again become the same.
 The prison blood-hounds, huge and grim,

From human looks the infection caught, 925
 And fondly crouched and fawned on him;

And men have heard the prisoners say,
 Who in their rotting dungeons lay,
 That from that hour, throughout one day,
 The fierce despair and hate which kept 930
 Their trampled bosoms almost slept:

Where, like twin vultures, they hung feeding
 On each heart's wound, wide torn and bleeding,—
 Because their jailors' rule, they thought, 934
 Grew merciful, like a parent's sway.

I know not how, but we were free:
 And Lionel sate alone with me,
 As the carriage drove thro' the streets apace;
 And we looked upon each other's face;

And the blood in our fingers intertwined 940
 Ran like the thoughts of a single mind,

As the swift emotions went and came

Thro' the veins of each united frame.
 So thro' the long long streets we passed

Of the million-peopled City vast;
 Which is that desert, where each one 946

Seeks his mate yet is alone,
 Beloved and sought and mourned of none;

Until the clear blue sky was seen,
 And the grassy meadows bright and green, 950

And then I sunk in his embrace,
 Enclosing there a mighty space
 Of love: and so we travelled on
 By woods, and fields of yellow flowers,

And towns, and villages, and towers, 955

Day after day of happy hours.

It was the azure time of June,
 When the skies are deep in the
 stainless noon,
 And the warm and fitful breezes
 shake
 The fresh green leaves of the hedge-
 row briar, 960
 And there were odours then to make
 The very breath we did respire
 A liquid element, whereon
 Our spirits, like delighted things
 That walk the air on subtle wings,
 Floated and mingled far away, 966
 'Mid the warm winds of the sunny
 day.
 And when the evening star came
 forth
 Above the curve of the new bent
 moon,
 And light and sound ebbed from
 the earth, 970
 Like the tide of the full and weary
 sea
 To the depths of its tranquillity,
 Our natures to its own repose
 Did the earth's breathless sleep
 attune:
 Like flowers, which on each other
 close 975
 Their languid leaves when day-
 light's gone,
 We lay, till new emotions came,
 Which seemed to make each
 mortal frame
 One soul of interwoven flame,
 A life in life, a second birth 980
 In worlds diviner far than earth,
 Which, like two strains of harmony
 That mingle in the silent sky
 Then slowly disunite, passed by
 And left the tenderness of tears, 985
 A soft oblivion of all fears,
 A sweet sleep: so we travelled on
 Till we came to the home of Lionel,
 Among the mountains wild and
 lone,
 Beside the hoary western sea, 990
 Which near the verge of the echo-
 ing shore
 The massy forest shadowed o'er.

The ancient steward, with hair all
 hoar,
 As we alighted, wept to see
 His master changed so fearfully;
 And the old man's sobs did waken
 me 996
 From my dream of unremaining
 gladness;
 The truth flashed o'er me like
 quick madness
 When I looked, and saw that there
 was death
 On Lionel: yet day by day 1000
 He lived, till fear grew hope and
 faith,
 And in my soul I dared to say,
 Nothing so bright can pass away:
 Death is dark, and foul, and dull,
 But he is—O how beautiful! 1005
 Yet day by day he grew more weak,
 And his sweet voice, when he
 might speak,
 Which ne'er was loud, became
 more low;
 And the light which flashed
 through his waxen cheek
 Grew faint, as the rose-like hues
 which flow 1010
 From sunset o'er the Alpine snow:
 And death seemed not like death
 in him,
 For the spirit of life o'er every limb
 Lingered, a mist of sense and
 thought.
 When the summer wind faint
 odours brought 1015
 From mountain flowers, even as it
 passed
 His cheek would change, as the
 noonday sea
 Which the dying breeze sweeps
 fitfully.
 If but a cloud the sky o'ercast,
 You might see his colour come and
 go, 1020
 And the softest strain of music made
 Sweet smiles, yet sad, arise and fade
 Amid the dew of his tender eyes;
 And the breath, with intermitting
 flow,

Made his pale lips quiver and part.
You might hear the beatings of his
heart, 1026

Quick, but not strong; and with
my tresses

When oft he playfully would bind
In the bowers of mossy loneliness
His neck, and win me so to mingle
In the sweet depth of woven
caresses, 1031

And our faint limbs were inter-
twined,

Alas! the unquiet life did tingle
From mine own heart through
every vein,

Like a captive in dreams of liberty,
Who beats the walls of his stony
cell. 1036

But his, it seemed already free,
Like the shadow of fire surround-
ing me!

On my faint eyes and limbs did dwell
That spirit as it passed, till soon,
As a frail cloud wandering o'er the
moon, 1041

Beneath its light invisible,
Is seen when it folds its gray wings
again

To alight on midnight's dusky
plain,

I lived and saw, and the gathering
soul 1045

Passed from beneath that strong
control,

And I fell on a life which was sick
with fear

Of all the woe that now I bear.

Amid a bloomless myrtle wood,
On a green and sea-girt promon-
tory, 1050

Not far from where we dwelt, there
stood

In record of a sweet sad story,
An altar and a temple bright
Circled by steps, and o'er the gate
Was sculptured, 'To Fidelity;' 1055
And in the shrine an image sate,
All veiled: but there was seen the
light

Of smiles, which faintly could
express

A mingled pain and tenderness

Through that ethereal drapery.

The left hand held the head, the
right— 1061

Beyond the veil, beneath the skin,
You might see the nerves quiver-
ing within—

Was forcing the point of a barbed
dart

Into its side-convulsing heart. 1065

An unskilled hand, yet one in-
formed

With genius, had the marble
warmed

With that pathetic life. This tale

It told: A dog had from the sea,
When the tide was raging fearfully,
Dragged Lionel's mother, weak
and pale, 1071

Then died beside her on the sand,
And she that temple thence had
planned;

But it was Lionel's own hand
Had wrought the image. Each
new moon 1075

That lady did, in this lone fane,
The rites of a religion sweet,
Whose god was in her heart and
brain:

The seasons' loveliest flowers were
strewn

On the marble floor beneath her
feet, 1080

And she brought crowns of sea-
buds white,

Whose odour is so sweet and faint,
And weeds, like branching chryso-
lite,

Woven in devices fine and quaint,
And tears from her brown eyes did
stain 1085

The altar: need but look upon
That dying statue fair and wan,
If tears should cease, to weep again:
And rare Arabian odours came,
Through the myrtle copses steam-
ing thence 1090

From the hissing frankincense,

Whose smoke, wool-white as ocean
 foam,
 Hung in dense flocks beneath the
 dome—
 That ivory dome, whose azure night
 With golden stars, like heaven,
 was bright— 1095
 O'er the split cedar's pointed flame;
 And the lady's harp would kindle
 there
 The melody of an old air,
 Softer than sleep; the villagers
 Mixed their religion up with hers,
 And as they listened round, shed
 tears. 1101

One eve he led me to this fane:
 Daylight on its last purple cloud
 Was lingering gray, and soon her
 strain 1104
 The nightingale began; now loud,
 Climbing in circles the windless sky,
 Now dying music; suddenly
 'Tis scattered in a thousand notes,
 And now to the hushed ear it floats
 Like field smells known in in-
 fancy, 1110
 Then failing, soothes the air again.
 We sate within that temple lone,
 Pavilioned round with Parian
 stone:
 His mother's harp stood near, and
 oft
 I had awakened music soft 1115
 Amid its wires: the nightingale
 Was pausing in her heaven-taught
 tale:
 'Now drain the cup,' said Lionel,
 'Which the poet-bird has crowned
 so well
 With the wine of her bright and
 liquid song! 1120
 Heardst thou not sweet words
 among
 That heaven-resounding min-
 strelsy?
 Heardst thou not, that those who
 die
 Awake in a world of ecstasy?

That love, when limbs are inter-
 woven, 1125
 And sleep, when the night of life
 is cloven,
 And thought, to the world's dim
 boundaries clinging,
 And music, when one beloved is
 singing,
 Is death? Let us drain right joy-
 ously
 The cup which the sweet bird fills
 for me.' 1130
 He paused, and to my lips he bent
 His own: like spirit his words went
 Through all my limbs with the
 speed of fire;
 And his keen eyes, glittering
 through mine,
 Filled me with the flame divine, 1135
 Which in their orbs was burning
 far,
 Like the light of an unmeasured
 star,
 In the sky of midnight dark and
 deep:
 Yes, 'twas his soul that did inspire
 Sounds, which my skill could ne'er
 awaken; 1140
 And first, I felt my fingers sweep
 The harp, and a long quivering cry
 Burst from my lips in symphony:
 The dusk and solid air was shaken,
 As swift and swifter the notes
 came 1145
 From my touch, that wandered
 like quick flame,
 And from my bosom, labouring
 With some unutterable thing:
 The awful sound of my own voice
 made
 My faint lips tremble; in some
 mood 1150
 Of wordless thought Lionel stood
 So pale, that even beside his cheek
 The snowy column from its shade
 Caught whiteness: yet his coun-
 tenance
 Raised upward, burned with radi-
 ance 1155

Of spirit-piercing joy, whose light,
Like the moon struggling through
the night

Of whirlwind-rifted clouds, did
break

With beams that might not be con-
fined.

I paused, but soon his gestures
kindled 1160

New power, as by the moving wind
The waves are lifted, and my song
To low soft notes now changed and
dwindled,

And from the twinkling wires
among,

My languid fingers drew and flung
Circles of life-dissolving sound, 1166

Yet faint; in æryrings they bound
My Lionel, who, as every strain

Grew fainter but more sweet, his
mien 1169

Sunk with the sound relaxedly;
And slowly now he turned to me,

As slowly faded from his face
That awful joy: with looks serene

He was soon drawn to my embrace,
And my wild song then died away

In murmurs: words I dare not say
We mixed, and on his lips mine fed

Till thy methought felt still and
cold:

'What is it with thee, love?' I said:
No word, no look, no motion! yes,

There was a change, but spare to
guess, 1181

Nor let that moment's hope be told.
I looked, and knew that he was

dead,
And fell, as the eagle on the plain

Falls when life deserts her brain,
And the mortal lightning is veiled

again. 1186

O that I were now dead! but such
(Did they not, love, demand too

much,
Those dying murmurs?) he for-
bade.

O that I once again were mad! 1190

1168-1171 See Editor's Note.

And yet, dear Rosalind, not so,
For I would live to share thy woe.
Sweet boy, did I forget thee too?
Alas, we know not what we do
When we speak words.

No memory more 1195
Is in my mind of that sea shore.

Madness came on me, and a troop
Of misty shapes did seem to sit

Beside me, on a vessel's poop,
And the clear north wind was
driving it. 1200

Then I heard strange tongues, and
saw strange flowers,

And the stars methought grew un-
like ours,

And the azure sky and the storm-
less sea

Made me believe that I had died,
And waked in a world, which was

to me 1205
Drear hell, though heaven to all

beside:
Then a dead sleep fell on my mind,

Whilst animal life many long years
Had rescue from a chasm of tears;

And when I woke, I wept to find 1210
That the same lady, bright and wise,

With silver locks and quick brown
eyes,

The mother of my Lionel,
Had tended me in my distress,

And died some months before.
Nor less 1215

Wonder, but far more peace and
joy

Brought in that hour my lovely
boy;

For through that trance my soul
had well

The impress of thy being kept;
And if I waked, or if I slept, 1220

No doubt, though memory faith-
less be,

Thy image ever dwelt on me;
And thus, O Lionel, like thee

Is our sweet child. 'Tis sure most
strange

I knew not of so great a change,
I knew not of so great a change,

1209 rescue] rescued ed. 1819. See Editor's Note.

As that which gave him birth, who
 now 1226
 Is all the solace of my woe.

That Lionel great wealth had left
 By will to me, and that of all
 The ready lies of law bereft 1230
 My child and me, might well befall.
 But let me think not of the scorn,
 Which from the meanest I have
 borne,
 When, for my child's belovèd sake,
 I mixed with slaves, to vindi-
 cate 1235
 The very laws themselves do make:
 Let me not say scorn is my fate,
 Lest I be proud, suffering the same
 With those who live in deathless
 fame.

She ceased.—'Lo, where red morn-
 ing thro' the woods 1240
 Is burning o'er the dew;' said
 Rosalind.
 And with these words they rose,
 and towards the flood
 Of the blue lake, beneath the
 leaves now wind
 With equal steps and fingers inter-
 twined:
 Thence to a lonely dwelling, where
 the shore 1245
 Is shadowed with deep rocks, and
 cypresses
 Cleave with their dark green cones
 the silent skies,
 And with their shadows the clear
 depths below,
 And where a little terrace from its
 bowers,
 Of blooming myrtle and faint
 lemon-flowers, 1250
 Scatters its sense-dissolving fra-
 grance o'er
 The liquid marble of the windless
 lake;
 And where the agèd forest's limbs
 look hoar,
 Under the leaves which their green
 garments make,

They come: 'tis Helen's home, and
 clean and white, 1255
 Like one which tyrants spare on
 our own land
 In some such solitude, its case-
 ments bright
 Shone through their vine-leaves
 in the morning sun,
 And even within 'twas scarce like
 Italy.
 And when she saw how all things
 there were planned, 1260
 As in an English home, dim
 memory
 Disturbed poor Rosalind: she
 stood as one
 Whose mind is where his body can-
 not be,
 Till Helen led her where her child
 yet slept,
 And said, 'Observe, that brow was
 Lionel's, 1265
 Those lips were his, and so he ever
 kept
 One arm in sleep, pillowing his
 head with it.
 You cannot see his eyes, they are
 two wells
 Of liquid love: let us not wake him
 yet.'
 But Rosalind could bear no more,
 and wept 1270
 A shower of burning tears, which
 fell upon
 His face, and so his opening lashes
 shone
 With tears unlike his own, as he
 did leap
 In sudden wonder from his inno-
 cent sleep.

So Rosalind and Helen lived to-
 gether 1275
 Thenceforth, changed in all else,
 yet friends again,
 Such as they were, when o'er the
 mountain heather
 They wandered in their youth,
 through sun and rain.

And after many years, for human things
 Change even like the ocean and the wind, ¹²⁸⁰
 Her daughter was restored to Rosalind,
 And in their circle thence some visitings
 Of joy 'mid their new calm would intervene:
 A lovely child she was, of looks serene,
 And motions which o'er things in-different shed ¹²⁸⁵
 The grace and gentleness from whence they came.
 And Helen's boy grew with her, and they fed
 From the same flowers of thought, until each mind
 Like springs which mingle in one flood became,
 And in their union soon their parents saw ¹²⁹⁰
 The shadow of the peace denied to them.
 And Rosalind, for when the living stem
 Is cankered in its heart, the tree must fall,
 Died ere her time; and with deep grief and awe
 The pale survivors followed her remains ¹²⁹⁵
 Beyond the region of dissolving rains,
 Up the cold mountain she was wont to call
 Her tomb; and on Chiavenna's precipice

They raised a pyramid of lasting ice,
 Whose polished sides, ere day had yet begun, ¹³⁰⁰
 Caught the first glow of the un-risen sun,
 The last, when it had sunk; and thro' the night
 The charioteers of Arctos wheelèd round
 Its glittering point, as seen from Helen's home,
 Whose sad inhabitants each year would come, ¹³⁰⁵
 With willing steps climbing that rugged height,
 And hang long locks of hair, and garlands bound
 With amaranth flowers, which, in the clime's despite,
 Filled the frore air with unaccus-tomed light:
 Such flowers, as in the wintry memory bloom ¹³¹⁰
 Of one friend left, adorned that frozen tomb.

 Helen, whose spirit was of softer mould,
 Whose sufferings too were less, Death slower led
 Into the peace of his dominion cold:
 She died among her kindred, being old. ¹³¹⁵
 And know, that if love die not in the dead
 As in the living, none of mortal kind
 Are blest, as now Helen and Rosa-lind.

NOTE BY MRS. SHELLEY

Rosalind and Helen was begun at Marlow, and thrown aside—till I found it; and, at my request, it was completed. Shelley had no care for any of his poems that did not emanate from the depths of his mind and develop some high or abstruse truth. When he does touch on human life and the human heart, no pictures can be more faithful, more delicate, more subtle, or more pathetic. He never mentioned Love but he shed a grace borrowed from his own nature, that scarcely any other poet has bestowed, on that passion.

When he spoke of it as the law of life, which inasmuch as we rebel against we err and injure ourselves and others, he promulgated that which he considered an irrefragable truth. In his eyes it was the essence of our being, and all woe and pain arose from the war made against it by selfishness, or insensibility, or mistake. By reverting in his mind to this first principle, he discovered the source of many emotions, and could disclose the secrets of all hearts; and his delineations of passion and emotion touch the finest chords of our nature.

Rosalind and Helen was finished during the summer of 1818, while we were at the baths of Lucca.

JULIAN AND MADDALO

A CONVERSATION

[Composed at Este after Shelley's first visit to Venice, 1818 (Autumn); first published in the *Posthumous Poems*, London, 1824 (ed. Mrs. Shelley). Shelley's original intention had been to print the poem in Leigh Hunt's *Examiner*; but he changed his mind and, on August 15, 1819, sent the MS. to Hunt to be published anonymously by Ollier. This MS., found by Mr. Townshend Mayer, and by him placed in the hands of Mr. H. Buxton Forman, C.B., is described at length in Mr. Forman's Library Edition of the poems (vol. iii, p. 107). The date, 'May, 1819,' affixed to *Julian and Maddalo* in the *P. P.*, 1824, indicates the time when the text was finally revised by Shelley. Sources of the text are (1) *P. P.*, 1824; (2) the Hunt MS.; (3) a fair draft of the poem amongst the Boscombe MSS.; (4) *Poetical Works*, 1839, 1st and 2nd edd. (Mrs. Shelley). Our text is that of the Hunt MS., as printed in Forman's Library Edition of the Poems, 1876, vol. iii, pp. 103-30; variants of 1824 are indicated in the footnotes; questions of punctuation are dealt with in the notes at end of the volume.]

PREFACE

The meadows with fresh streams, the bees with thyme,
The goats with the green leaves of budding Spring,
Are saturated not—nor Love with tears.—VIRGIL'S *Gallus*.

COUNT MADDALO is a Venetian nobleman of ancient family and of great fortune, who, without mixing much in the society of his countrymen, resides chiefly at his magnificent palace in that city. He is a person of the most consummate genius, and capable, if he would direct his energies to such an end, of becoming the redeemer of his degraded country. But it is his weakness to be proud: he derives, from a comparison of his own extraordinary mind with the dwarfish intellects that surround him, an intense apprehension of the nothingness of human life. His passions and his powers are incomparably greater than those of other men; and, instead of the latter having been employed in curbing the former, they have mutually lent each other strength. His ambition preys upon itself, for want of objects which it can consider worthy of exertion. I say that Maddalo is proud, because I can find no other word to express the concentered and impatient feelings which consume him; but it is on his own hopes and affections only that he seems to trample, for in social life no human being can be more gentle, patient, and unassuming than Maddalo. He is cheerful, frank, and witty. His more serious conversation is a sort of intoxication; men are held by it as by a spell. He has travelled much;

and there is an inexpressible charm in his relation of his adventures in different countries.

Julian is an Englishman of good family, passionately attached to those philosophical notions which assert the power of man over his own mind, and the immense improvements of which, by the extinction of certain moral superstitions, human society may be yet susceptible. Without concealing the evil in the world, he is for ever speculating how good may be made superior. He is a complete infidel, and a scoffer at all things reputed holy; and Maddalo takes a wicked pleasure in drawing out his taunts against religion. What Maddalo thinks on these matters is not exactly known. Julian, in spite of his heterodox opinions, is conjectured by his friends to possess some good qualities. How far this is possible the pious reader will determine. Julian is rather serious.

Of the Maniac I can give no information. He seems, by his own account, to have been disappointed in love. He was evidently a very cultivated and amiable person when in his right senses. His story, told at length, might be like many other stories of the same kind: the unconnected exclamations of his agony will perhaps be found a sufficient comment for the text of every heart.

I RODE one evening with Count Maddalo	
Upon the bank of land which breaks the flow	
Of Adria towards Venice: a bare strand	
Of hillocks, heaped from ever-shifting sand,	
Matted with thistles and amphibious weeds,	5
Such as from earth's embrace the salt ooze breeds,	
Is this; an uninhabited sea-side,	
Which the lone fisher, when his nets are dried,	
Abandons; and no other object breaks	
The waste, but one dwarf tree and some few stakes	10
Broken and unrepaired, and the tide makes	
A narrow space of level sand thereon,	
Where 'twas our wont to ride while day went down.	
This ride was my delight. I love all waste	
And solitary places; where we taste	15
The pleasure of believing what we see	
Is boundless, as we wish our souls to be:	
And such was this wide ocean, and this shore	
More barren than its billows; and yet more	
Than all, with a remembered friend I love	20
To ride as then I rode;—for the winds drove	
The living spray along the sunny air	
Into our faces; the blue heavens were bare,	
Stripped to their depths by the awakening north;	
And, from the waves, sound like delight broke forth	25
Harmonising with solitude, and sent	
Into our hearts aerial merriment.	
So, as we rode, we talked; and the swift thought,	
Winging itself with laughter, lingered not,	
But flew from brain to brain,—such glee was ours,	30
Charged with light memories of remembered hours,	

None slow enough for sadness: till we came
 Homeward, which always makes the spirit tame.
 This day had been cheerful but cold, and now
 The sun was sinking, and the wind also. 35
 Our talk grew somewhat serious, as may be
 Talk interrupted with such raillery
 As mocks itself, because it cannot scorn
 The thoughts it would extinguish:—'twas forlorn,
 Yet pleasing, such as once, so poets tell, 40
 The devils held within the dales of Hell
 Concerning God, freewill and destiny:
 Of all that earth has been or yet may be,
 All that yain men imagine or believe,
 Or hope can paint or suffering may achieve, 45
 We descanted, and I (for ever still
 Is it not wise to make the best of ill?)
 Argued against despondency, but pride
 Made my companion take the darker side.
 The sense that he was greater than his kind 50
 Had struck, methinks, his eagle spirit blind
 By gazing on its own exceeding light.
 Meanwhile the sun paused ere it should alight,
 Over the horizon of the mountains;—Oh,
 How beautiful is sunset, when the glow 55
 Of Heaven descends upon a land like thee,
 Thou Paradise of exiles, Italy!
 Thy mountains, seas, and vineyards, and the towers
 Of cities they encircle!—it was ours
 To stand on thee, beholding it: and then, 60
 Just where we had dismounted, the Count's men
 Were waiting for us with the gondola.—
 As those who pause on some delightful way
 Though bent on pleasant pilgrimage, we stood
 Looking upon the evening, and the flood 65
 Which lay between the city and the shore,
 Paved with the image of the sky . . . the hoar
 And aëry Alps towards the North appeared
 Through mist, an heaven-sustaining bulwark reared
 Between the East and West; and half the sky 70
 Was roofed with clouds of rich emblazonry
 Dark purple at the zenith, which still grew
 Down the steep West into a wondrous hue
 Brighter than burning gold, even to the rent
 Where the swift sun yet paused in his descent 75
 Among the many-folded hills: they were
 Those famous Euganean hills, which bear,
 As seen from Lido thro' the harbour piles,
 The likeness of a clump of peakèd isles—
 And then—as if the Earth and Sea had been 80

Dissolved into one lake of fire, were seen
 Those mountains towering as from waves of flame
 Around the vaporous sun, from which there came
 The inmost purple spirit of light, and made
 Their very peaks transparent. 'Ere it fade,' 85
 Said my companion, 'I will show you soon
 A better station'—so, o'er the lagune
 We glided; and from that funereal bark
 I leaned, and saw the city, and could mark
 How from their many isles, in evening's gleam, 90
 Its temples and its palaces did seem
 Like fabrics of enchantment piled to Heaven.
 I was about to speak, when—'We are even
 Now at the point I meant,' said Maddalo,
 And bade the gondolieri cease to row. 95
 'Look, Julian, on the west, and listen well
 If you hear not a deep and heavy bell.'
 I looked, and saw between us and the sun
 A building on an island; such a one
 As age to age might add, for uses vile, 100
 A windowless, deformed and dreary pile;
 And on the top an open tower, where hung
 A bell, which in the radiance swayed and swung;
 We could just hear its hoarse and iron tongue:
 The broad sun sunk behind it, and it tolled 105
 In strong and black relief.—'What we behold
 Shall be the madhouse and its belfry tower,'
 Said Maddalo, 'and ever at this hour
 Those who may cross the water, hear that bell
 Which calls the maniacs, each one from his cell, 110
 To vespers.'—'As much skill as need to pray
 In thanks or hope for their dark lot have they
 To their stern maker,' I replied. 'O ho!
 You talk as in years past,' said Maddalo.
 'Tis strange men change not. You were ever still 115
 Among Christ's flock a perilous infidel,
 A wolf for the meek lambs—if you can't swim
 Beware of Providence.' I looked on him,
 But the gay smile had faded in his eye.
 'And such,'—he cried, 'is our mortality, 120
 And this must be the emblem and the sign
 Of what should be eternal and divine!—
 And like that black and dreary bell, the soul,
 Hung in a heaven-illuminated tower, must toll
 Our thoughts and our desires to meet below 125
 Round the rent heart and pray—as madmen do
 For what? they know not,—till the night of death
 As sunset that strange vision, severeth

99 a one *Hunt MS.*; an one 1824. 105 sunk *Hunt MS.*; sank 1824.
 108 ever *Hunt MS.*; even 1824. 119 in *Hunt MS.*; from 1824. 124 a *Hunt MS.*; an 1824.

Our memory from itself, and us from all
 We sought and yet were baffled.' I recall 130
 The sense of what he said, although I mar
 The force of his expressions. The broad star
 Of day meanwhile had sunk behind the hill,
 And the black bell became invisible,
 And the red tower looked gray, and all between 135
 The churches, ships and palaces were seen
 Huddled in gloom;—into the purple sea
 The orange hues of heaven sunk silently.
 We hardly spoke, and soon the gondola
 Conveyed me to my lodging by the way. 140

The following morn was rainy, cold and dim:
 Ere Maddalo arose, I called on him,
 And whilst I waited with his child I played;
 A lovelier toy sweet Nature never made,
 A serious, subtle, wild, yet gentle being, 145
 Graceful without design and unforeseeing,
 With eyes—Oh speak not of her eyes!—which seem
 Twin mirrors of Italian Heaven, yet gleam
 With such deep meaning, as we never see
 But in the human countenance: with me 150
 She was a special favourite: I had nursed
 Her fine and feeble limbs when she came first
 To this bleak world; and she yet seemed to know
 On second sight her ancient playfellow,
 Less changed than she was by six months or so; 155
 For after her first shyness was worn out
 We sate there, rolling billiard balls about,
 When the Count entered. Salutations past—
 'The word you spoke last night might well have cast
 A darkness on my spirit—if man be 160
 The passive thing you say, I should not see
 Much harm in the religions and old saws
 (Tho' I may never own such leaden laws)
 Which break a teachless nature to the yoke:
 Mine is another faith'—thus much I spoke 165
 And noting he replied not, added: 'See
 This lovely child, blithe, innocent and free;
 She spends a happy time with little care,
 While we to such sick thoughts subjected are
 As came on you last night—it is our will 170
 That thus enchains us to permitted ill—
 We might be otherwise—we might be all
 We dream of happy, high, majestic.
 Where is the love, beauty, and truth we seek
 But in our mind? and if we were not weak 175
 Should we be less in deed than in desire?'

140 lodging 1824; lodgings *Hunt MS.*
 175 mind *Hunt MS.*; minds 1824.

171 That *Hunt MS.*; Which 1824.

'Ay, if we were not weak—and we aspire
 How vainly to be strong!' said Maddalo:
 'You talk Utopia.' 'It remains to know,'
 I then rejoined, 'and those who try may find 180
 How strong the chains are which our spirit bind;
 Brittle perchance as straw . . . We are assured
 Much may be conquered, much may be endured,
 Of what degrades and crushes us. We know
 That we have power over ourselves to do 185
 And suffer—what, we know not till we try;
 But something nobler than to live and die—
 So taught those kings of old philosophy
 Who reigned, before Religion made men blind;
 And those who suffer with their suffering kind 190
 Yet feel their faith, religion.' 'My dear friend,'
 Said Maddalo, 'my judgement will not bend
 To your opinion, though I think you might
 Make such a system refutation-tight
 As far as words go. I knew one like you 195
 Who to this city came some months ago,
 With whom I argued in this sort, and he
 Is now gone mad,—and so he answered me,—
 Poor fellow! but if you would like to go
 We'll visit him, and his wild talk will show 200
 How vain are such aspiring theories.'
 'I hope to prove the induction otherwise,
 And that a want of that true theory, still,
 Which seeks a "soul of goodness" in things ill
 Or in himself or others, has thus bowed 205
 His being—there are some by nature proud,
 Who patient in all else demand but this—
 To love and be beloved with gentleness;
 And being scorned, what wonder if they die
 Some living death? this is not destiny 210
 But man's own wilful ill.'

As thus I spoke
 Servants announced the gondola, and we
 Through the fast-falling rain and high-wrought sea
 Sailed to the island where the madhouse stands.
 We disembarked. The clap of tortured hands, 215
 Fierce yells and howlings and lamentings keen,
 And laughter where complaint had merrier been,
 Moans, shrieks, and curses, and blaspheming prayers
 Accosted us. We climbed the oozy stairs
 Into an old courtyard. I heard on high, 220
 Then, fragments of most touching melody,
 But looking up saw not the singer there—
 Through the black bars in the tempestuous air

179 know 1824; see *Hunt MS.* 188 those *Hunt MS.*; the 1824. 191 their *Hunt MS.*;
 this 1824. 218 Moans, &c., *Hunt MS.* The line is wanting in *edd.* 1824 and 1839.

I saw, like weeds on a wrecked palace growing,
 Long tangled locks flung wildly forth, and flowing, 225
 Of those who on a sudden were beguiled
 Into strange silence, and looked forth and smiled
 Hearing sweet sounds.—Then I: ‘Methinks there were
 A cure of these with patience and kind care,
 If music can thus move . . . but what is he 230
 Whom we seek here?’ ‘Of his sad history
 I know but this,’ said Maddalo: ‘he came
 To Venice a dejected man, and fame
 Said he was wealthy, or he had been so;
 Some thought the loss of fortune wrought him woe; 235
 But he was ever talking in such sort
 As you do—far more sadly—he seemed hurt,
 Even as a man with his peculiar wrong,
 To hear but of the oppression of the strong,
 Or those absurd deceits (I think with you 240
 In some respects, you know) which carry through
 The excellent impostors of this earth
 When they outface detection—he had worth,
 Poor fellow! but a humourist in his way’—
 ‘Alas, what drove him mad?’ ‘I cannot say: 245
 A lady came with him from France, and when
 She left him and returned, he wandered then
 About yon lonely isles of desert sand
 Till he grew wild—he had no cash or land
 Remaining,—the police had brought him here— 250
 Some fancy took him and he would not bear
 Removal; so I fitted up for him
 Those rooms beside the sea, to please his whim,
 And sent him busts and books and urns for flowers,
 Which had adorned his life in happier hours, 255
 And instruments of music—you may guess
 A stranger could do little more or less
 For one so gentle and unfortunate:
 And those are his sweet strains which charm the weight
 From madmen’s chains, and make this Hell appear 260
 A heaven of sacred silence, hushed to hear.’—
 ‘Nay, this was kind of you—he had no claim,
 As the world says’—‘None—but the very same
 Which I on all mankind were I as he
 Fallen to such deep reverse;—his melody 265
 Is interrupted—now we hear the din
 Of madmen, shriek on shriek, again begin;
 Let us now visit him; after this strain
 He ever communes with himself again,
 And sees nor hears not any.’ Having said 270
 These words we called the keeper, and he led
 To an apartment opening on the sea—

There the poor wretch was sitting mournfully
 Near a piano, his pale fingers twined
 One with the other, and the ooze and wind 275
 Rushed through an open casement, and did sway
 His hair, and starred it with the brackish spray;
 His head was leaning on a music book,
 And he was muttering, and his lean limbs shook;
 His lips were pressed against a folded leaf 280
 In hue too beautiful for health, and grief
 Smiled in their motions as they lay apart—
 As one who wrought from his own fervid heart
 The eloquence of passion, soon he raised
 His sad meek face and eyes lustrous and glazed 285
 And spoke—sometimes as one who wrote, and thought
 His words might move some heart that heeded not,
 If sent to distant lands: and then as one
 Reproaching deeds never to be undone
 With wondering self-compassion; then his speech 290
 Was lost in grief, and then his words came each
 Unmodulated, cold, expressionless,—
 But that from one jarred accent you might guess
 It was despair made them so uniform:
 And all the while the loud and gusty storm 295
 Hissed through the window, and we stood behind
 Stealing his accents from the envious wind
 Unseen. I yet remember what he said
 Distinctly: such impression his words made.

‘Month after month,’ he cried, ‘to bear this load 300
 And as a jade urged by the whip and goad
 To drag life on, which like a heavy chain
 Lengthens behind with many a link of pain!—
 And not to speak my grief—O, not to dare
 To give a human voice to my despair, 305
 But live and move, and, wretched thing! smile on
 As if I never went aside to groan,
 And wear this mask of falsehood even to those
 Who are most dear—not for my own repose—
 Alas! no scorn or pain or hate could be 310
 So heavy as that falsehood is to me—
 But that I cannot bear more altered faces
 Than needs must be, more changed and cold embraces,
 More misery, disappointment, and mistrust
 To own me for their father . . . Would the dust 315
 Were covered in upon my body now!
 That the life ceased to toil within my brow!
 And then these thoughts would at the least be fled;
 Let us not fear such pain can vex the dead.

'What Power delights to torture us? I know
 That to myself I do not wholly owe 320
 What now I suffer, though in part I may.
 Alas! none strewed sweet flowers upon the way
 Where wandering heedlessly, I met pale Pain
 My shadow, which will leave me not again— 325
 If I have erred, there was no joy in error,
 But pain and insult and unrest and terror;
 I have not as some do, bought penitence
 With pleasure, and a dark yet sweet offence,
 For then,—if love and tenderness and truth 330
 Had overlived hope's momentary youth,
 My creed should have redeemed me from repenting;
 But loathed scorn and outrage unrelenting
 Met love excited by far other seeming
 Until the end was gained . . . as one from dreaming 335
 Of sweetest peace, I woke, and found my state
 Such as it is.—

'O Thou, my spirit's mate
 Who, for thou art compassionate and wise,
 Wouldst pity me from thy most gentle eyes
 If this sad writing thou shouldst ever see— 340
 My secret groans must be unheard by thee,
 Thou wouldst weep tears bitter as blood to know
 Thy lost friend's incommunicable woe.

'Ye few by whom my nature has been weighed
 In friendship, let me not that name degrade 345
 By placing on your hearts the secret load
 Which crushes mine to dust. There is one road
 To peace and that is truth, which follow ye!
 Love sometimes leads astray to misery.
 Yet think not though subdued—and I may well 350
 Say that I am subdued—that the full Hell
 Within me would infect the untainted breast
 Of sacred nature with its own unrest;
 As some perverted beings think to find
 In scorn or hate a medicine for the mind 355
 Which scorn or hate have wounded—O how vain!
 The dagger heals not but may rend again . . .
 Believe that I am ever still the same
 In creed as in resolve, and what may tame
 My heart, must leave the understanding free, 360
 Or all would sink in this keen agony—
 Nor dream that I will join the vulgar cry;
 Or with my silence sanction tyranny;
 Or seek a moment's shelter from my pain
 In any madness which the world calls gain, 365

323 sweet *Hunt MS.*; fresh 1824.
 keen *Hunt MS.*; under this 1824.

356 have *Hunt MS.*; hath 1824.
 362 cry *Hunt MS.*; eye 1824.

361 in this

Ambition or revenge or thoughts as stern
 As those which make me what I am; or turn
 To avarice or misanthropy or lust . . .
 Heap on me soon, O grave, thy welcome dust!
 Till then the dungeon may demand its prey, 370
 And Poverty and Shame may meet and say—
 Halting beside me on the public way—
 “That love-devoted youth is ours—let’s sit
 Beside him—he may live some six months yet.”
 Or the red scaffold, as our country bends, 375
 May ask some willing victim, or ye friends
 May fall under some sorrow which this heart
 Or hand may share or vanquish or avert;
 I am prepared—in truth with no proud joy—
 To do or suffer aught, as when a boy 380
 I did devote to justice and to love
 My nature, worthless now! . . .

‘I must remove
 A veil from my pent mind. ’Tis torn aside!
 O, pallid as Death’s dedicated bride,
 Thou mockery which art sitting by my side, 385
 Am I not wan like thee? at the grave’s call
 I haste, invited to thy wedding-ball
 To greet the ghastly paramour, for whom
 Thou hast deserted me . . . and made the tomb
 Thy bridal bed . . . But I beside your feet 390
 Will lie and watch ye from my winding sheet—
 Thus . . . wide awake tho’ dead . . . yet stay, O stay!
 Go not so soon—I know not what I say—
 Hear but my reasons . . . I am mad, I fear,
 My fancy is o’erwrought . . . thou art not here . . . 395
 Pale art thou, ’tis most true . . . but thou art gone,
 Thy work is finished . . . I am left alone!—

‘Nay, was it I who wooed thee to this breast
 Which, like a serpent, thou envenomest
 As in repayment of the warmth it lent? 400
 Didst thou not seek me for thine own content?
 Did not thy love awaken mine? I thought
 That thou wert she who said, “You kiss me not
 Ever, I fear you do not love me now”—
 In truth I loved even to my overthrow 405
 Her, who would fain forget these words: but they
 Cling to her mind, and cannot pass away.

‘You say that I am proud—that when I speak
 My lip is tortured with the wrongs which break
 The spirit it expresses . . . Never one 410
 Humbled himself before, as I have done!

Even the instinctive worm on which we tread
 Turns, though it wound not—then with prostrate head
 Sinks in the dusk and writhes like me—and dies?
 No: wears a living death of agonies!
 As the slow shadows of the pointed grass
 Mark the eternal periods, his pangs pass
 Slow, ever-moving,—making moments be
 As mine seem—each an immortality!

415

‘That you had never seen me—never heard
 My voice, and more than all had ne’er endured
 The deep pollution of my loathed embrace—
 That your eyes ne’er had lied love in my face—
 That, like some maniac monk, I had torn out
 The nerves of manhood by their bleeding root
 With mine own quivering fingers, so that ne’er
 Our hearts had for a moment mingled there
 To disunite in horror—these were not
 With thee, like some suppressed and hideous thought
 Which flits athwart our musings, but can find
 No rest within a pure and gentle mind . . .
 Thou sealedst them with many a bare broad word,
 And searedst my memory o’er them,—for I heard
 And can forget not . . . they were ministered
 One after one, those curses. Mix them up
 Like self-destroying poisons in one cup,
 And they will make one blessing which thou ne’er
 Didst imprecate for, on me,—death.

420

425

430

435

‘It were
 A cruel punishment for one most cruel,
 If such can love, to make that love the fuel
 Of the mind’s hell; hate, scorn, remorse, despair:
 But *me*—whose heart a stranger’s tear might wear
 As water-drops the sandy fountain-stone,
 Who loved and pitied all things, and could moan
 For woes which others hear not, and could see
 The absent with the glance of phantasy,
 And with the poor and trampled sit and weep,
 Following the captive to his dungeon deep;
Me—who am as a nerve o’er which do creep
 The else unfelt oppressions of this earth,
 And was to thee the flame upon thy hearth,
 When all beside was cold—that thou on me
 Shouldst rain these plagues of blistering agony—
 Such curses are from lips once eloquent
 With love’s too partial praise—let none relent
 Who intend deeds too dreadful for a name

440

445

450

455

Henceforth, if an example for the same
 They seek . . . for thou on me lookedst so, and so—
 And didst speak thus . . . and thus . . . I live to show
 How much men bear and die not!

‘Thou wilt tell,

460

With the grimace of hate, how horrible
 It was to meet my love when thine grew less;
 Thou wilt admire how I could e’er address
 Such features to love’s work . . . this taunt, though true,
 (For indeed Nature nor in form nor hue
 Bestowed on me her choicest workmanship)
 Shall not be thy defence . . . for since thy lip
 Met mine first, years long past, since thine eye kindled
 With soft fire under mine, I have not dwindled
 Nor changed in mind or body, or in aught
 But as love changes what it loveth not
 After long years and many trials.

465

470

‘How vain

Are words! I thought never to speak again,
 Not even in secret,—not to my own heart—
 But from my lips the unwilling accents start,
 And from my pen the words flow as I write,
 Dazzling my eyes with scalding tears . . . my sight
 Is dim to see that characterized in vain
 On this unfeeling leaf which burns the brain
 And eats into it . . . blotting all things fair
 And wise and good which time had written there.

475

480

‘Those who inflict must suffer, for they see
 The work of their own hearts, and this must be
 Our chastisement or recompense—O child!
 I would that thine were like to be more mild
 For both our wretched sakes . . . for thine the most
 Who feelest already all that thou hast lost
 Without the power to wish it thine again;
 And as slow years pass, a funereal train
 Each with the ghost of some lost hope or friend
 Following it like its shadow, wilt thou bend
 No thought on my dead memory?

485

490

‘Alas, love!

Fear me not . . . against thee I would not move
 A finger in despite. Do I not live
 That thou mayst have less bitter cause to grieve?
 I give thee tears for scorn and love for hate;
 And that thy lot may be less desolate
 Than his on whom thou tramplest, I refrain
 From that sweet sleep which medicines all pain.

495

467 lip *Hunt MS.*; life 1824.
MS.; Pd 1824.

483 this *Hunt MS.*; that 1824.

493 I would *Hunt*

Then, when thou speakest of me, never say
 "He could forgive not." Here I cast away 500
 All human passions, all revenge, all pride;
 I think, speak, act no ill; I do but hide
 Under these words, like embers, every spark
 Of that which has consumed me—quick and dark 505
 The grave is yawning . . . as its roof shall cover
 My limbs with dust and worms under and over
 So let Oblivion hide this grief . . . the air
 Closes upon my accents, as despair
 Upon my heart—let death upon despair! 510

He ceased, and overcome leant back awhile,
 Then rising, with a melancholy smile
 Went to a sofa, and lay down, and slept
 A heavy sleep, and in his dreams he wept
 And muttered some familiar name, and we 515
 Wept without shame in his society.
 I think I never was impressed so much;
 The man who were not, must have lacked a touch
 Of human nature . . . then we lingered not,
 Although our argument was quite forgot, 520
 But calling the attendants, went to dine
 At Maddalo's; yet neither cheer nor wine
 Could give us spirits, for we talked of him
 And nothing else, till daylight made stars dim;
 And we agreed his was some dreadful ill 525
 Wrought on him boldly, yet unspeakable,
 By a dear friend; some deadly change in love
 Of one vowed deeply which he dreamed not of;
 For whose sake he, it seemed, had fixed a blot 530
 Of falsehood on his mind which flourished not
 But in the light of all-beholding truth;
 And having stamped this canker on his youth
 She had abandoned him—and how much more
 Might be his woe, we guessed not—he had store
 Of friends and fortune once, as we could guess 535
 From his nice habits and his gentleness;
 These were now lost . . . it were a grief indeed
 If he had changed one unsustaining reed
 For all that such a man might else adorn.
 The colours of his mind seemed yet unworn; 540
 For the wild language of his grief was high,
 Such as in measure were called poetry;
 And I remember one remark which then
 Maddalo made. He said: 'Most wretched men
 Are cradled into poetry by wrong, 545
 They learn in suffering what they teach in song.'

510 despair *Hunt MS.*, 1824; my care 1839.

511 leant] *See Editor's Note.*

518 were *Hunt MS.*, 1824; was 1839.

525 his *Hunt MS.*; it 1824.

530 on *Hunt MS.*;

in 1824.

537 were now *Hunt MS.*; now were 1824.

If I had been an unconnected man
 I, from this moment, should have formed some plan
 Never to leave sweet Venice,—for to me
 It was delight to ride by the lone sea; 550
 And then, the town is silent—one may write
 Or read in gondolas by day or night,
 Having the little brazen lamp alight,
 Unseen, uninterrupted; books are there,
 Pictures, and casts from all those statues fair 555
 Which were twin-born with poetry, and all
 We seek in towns, with little to recall
 Regrets for the green country. I might sit
 In Maddalo's great palace, and his wit
 And subtle talk would cheer the winter night 560
 And make me know myself, and the firelight
 Would flash upon our faces, till the day
 Might dawn and make me wonder at my stay:
 But I had friends in London too: the chief
 Attraction here, was that I sought relief 565
 From the deep tenderness that maniac wrought
 Within me—'twas perhaps an idle thought—
 But I imagined that if day by day
 I watched him, and but seldom went away,
 And studied all the beatings of his heart 570
 With zeal, as men study some stubborn art
 For their own good, and could by patience find
 An entrance to the caverns of his mind,
 I might reclaim him from his dark estate:
 In friendships I had been most fortunate— 575
 Yet never saw I one whom I would call
 More willingly my friend; and this was all
 Accomplished not; such dreams of baseless good
 Oft come and go in crowds or solitude
 And leave no trace—but what I now designed 580
 Made for long years impression on my mind.
 The following morning, urged by my affairs,
 I left bright Venice.

After many years
 And many changes I returned; the name
 Of Venice, and its aspect, was the same; 585
 But Maddalo was travelling far away
 Among the mountains of Armenia.
 His dog was dead. His child had now become
 A woman; such as it has been my doom
 To meet with few,—a wonder of this earth, 590
 Where there is little of transcendent worth,—
 Like one of Shakespeare's women: kindly she,
 And, with a manner beyond courtesy,

558 Regrets *Hunt MS.*; Regret 1824. 569 but *Hunt MS.*; wanting in edd. 1824 and 1839.
 574 his 1824; this [?] *Hunt MS.*

Received her father's friend; and when I asked
Of the lorn maniac, she her memory tasked,
And told as she had heard the mournful tale:
'That the poor sufferer's health began to fail
Two years from my departure, but that then
The lady who had left him, came again.
Her mien had been imperious, but she now
Looked meek—perhaps remorse had brought her low.
Her coming made him better, and they stayed
Together at my father's—for I played,
As I remember, with the lady's shawl—
I might be six years old—but after all
She left him' . . . 'Why, her heart must have been tough:
How did it end?' 'And was not this enough?
They met—they parted'—'Child, is there no more?'
'Something within that interval which bore
The stamp of *why* they parted, *how* they met:
Yet if thine agèd eyes disdain to wet
Those wrinkled cheeks with youth's remembered tears,
Ask me no more, but let the silent years
Be closed and cered over their memory
As yon mute marble where their corpses lie.'
I urged and questioned still, she told me how
All happened—but the cold world shall not know.

CANCELLED FRAGMENTS OF JULIAN AND MADDALO

‘What think you the dead are?’ ‘Why, dust and clay,
What should they be?’ ‘’Tis the last hour of day.
Look on the west, how beautiful it is
Vaulted with radiant vapours! The deep bliss
Of that unutterable light has made
The edges of that cloud fade
Into a hue, like some harmonious thought,
Wasting itself on that which it had wrought,
Till it dies and between
The light hues of the tender, pure, serene,
And infinite tranquillity of heaven.
Ay, beautiful! but when not. . . .’

‘Perhaps the only comfort which remains
Is the unheeded clanking of my chains,
The which I make, and call it melody.’

NOTE BY MRS. SHELLEY

FROM the Baths of Lucca, in 1818, Shelley visited Venice; and, circumstances rendering it eligible that we should remain a few weeks in the neighbourhood of that city, he accepted the offer of Lord Byron, who lent him the use of a villa he rented near Este; and he sent for his family from Lucca to join him.

I Capuccini was a villa built on the site of a Capuchin convent, demolished when the French suppressed religious houses; it was situated on the very

overhanging brow of a low hill at the foot of a range of higher ones. The house was cheerful and pleasant; a vine-trellised walk, a *pergola*, as it is called in Italian, led from the hall-door to a summer-house at the end of the garden, which Shelley made his study, and in which he began the *Prometheus*; and here also, as he mentions in a letter, he wrote *Julian and Maddalo*. A slight ravine, with a road in its depth, divided the garden from the hill, on which stood the ruins of the ancient castle of Este, whose dark massive wall gave forth an echo, and from whose ruined crevices owls and bats flitted forth at night, as the crescent moon sunk behind the black and heavy battlements. We looked from the garden over the wide plain of Lombardy, bounded to the west by the far Apennines, while to the east the horizon was lost in misty distance. After the picturesque but limited view of mountain, ravine, and chestnut-wood, at the Baths of Lucca, there was something infinitely gratifying to the eye in the wide range of prospect commanded by our new abode.

Our first misfortune, of the kind from which we soon suffered even more severely, happened here. Our little girl, an infant in whose small features I fancied that I traced great resemblance to her father, showed symptoms of suffering from the heat of the climate. Teething increased her illness and danger. We were at Este, and when we became alarmed, hastened to Venice for the best advice. When we arrived at Fusina, we found that we had forgotten our passport, and the soldiers on duty attempted to prevent our crossing the laguna; but they could not resist Shelley's impetuosity at such a moment. We had scarcely arrived at Venice before life fled from the little sufferer, and we returned to Este to weep her loss.

After a few weeks spent in this retreat, which was interspersed by visits to Venice, we proceeded southward.

PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

A LYRICAL DRAMA

IN FOUR ACTS

AUDISNE HAEC AMPHIARAE, SUB TERRAM ABDITE?

[Composed at Este, Sept., Oct., 1818 (Act I); at Rome, March–April 6, 1819 (Acts II, III); at Florence, close of 1819 (Act IV). Published by C. and J. Ollier, London, summer of 1820. Sources of the text are (1) edition of 1820; (2) text in *P. W.*, 1839, prepared with the aid of a list of *errata* in (1) written out by Shelley; (3) a fair draft in Shelley's autograph, now in the Bodleian. This has been carefully collated by Mr. C. D. Locock, who prints the result in his *Examination of the Shelley MSS. in the Bodleian Library*, Oxford (Clarendon Press), 1903. Our text is that of 1820, modified by ed. 1839, and by the Bodleian fair copy. In the following notes B = the Bodleian MS.; 1820 = the *editio princeps*, printed by Marchant for C. and J. Ollier, London; and 1839 = the text as edited by Mrs. Shelley in the *Poetical Works*, 1st and 2nd edd., 1839. The reader should consult the notes on the Play at the end of the volume.]

PREFACE

THE Greek tragic writers, in selecting as their subject any portion of their national history or mythology, employed in their treatment of it a certain arbitrary discretion. They by no means conceived themselves bound to adhere to the common interpretation or to imitate in story as in title their

rivals and predecessors. Such a system would have amounted to a resignation of those claims to preference over their competitors which incited the composition. The Agamemnonian story was exhibited on the Athenian theatre with as many variations as dramas.

I have presumed to employ a similar licence. The *Prometheus Unbound* of Æschylus supposed the reconciliation of Jupiter with his victim as the price of the disclosure of the danger threatened to his empire by the consummation of his marriage with Thetis. Thetis, according to this view of the subject, was given in marriage to Peleus, and Prometheus, by the permission of Jupiter, delivered from his captivity by Hercules. Had I framed my story on this model, I should have done no more than have attempted to restore the lost drama of Æschylus : an ambition which, if my preference to this mode of treating the subject had incited me to cherish, the recollection of the high comparison such an attempt would challenge might well abate. But, in truth, I was averse from a catastrophe so feeble as that of reconciling the Champion with the Oppressor of mankind. The moral interest of the fable, which is so powerfully sustained by the sufferings and endurance of Prometheus, would be annihilated if we could conceive of him as unsaying his high language and quailing before his successful and perfidious adversary. The only imaginary being resembling in any degree Prometheus, is Satan ; and Prometheus is, in my judgement, a more poetical character than Satan, because, in addition to courage, and majesty, and firm and patient opposition to omnipotent force, he is susceptible of being described as exempt from the taints of ambition, envy, revenge, and a desire for personal aggrandisement, which, in the Hero of *Paradise Lost*, interfere with the interest. The character of Satan engenders in the mind a pernicious casuistry which leads us to weigh his faults with his wrongs, and to excuse the former because the latter exceed all measure. In the minds of those who consider that magnificent fiction with a religious feeling it engenders something worse. But Prometheus is, as it were, the type of the highest perfection of moral and intellectual nature, impelled by the purest and the truest motives to the best and noblest ends.

This Poem was chiefly written upon the mountainous ruins of the Baths of Caracalla, among the flowery glades, and thickets of odoriferous blossoming trees, which are extended in ever winding labyrinths upon its immense platforms and dizzy arches suspended in the air. The bright blue sky of Rome, and the effect of the vigorous awakening spring in that divinest climate, and the new life with which it drenches the spirits even to intoxication, were the inspiration of this drama.

The imagery which I have employed will be found, in many instances, to have been drawn from the operations of the human mind, or from those external actions by which they are expressed. This is unusual in modern poetry, although Dante and Shakespeare are full of instances of the same kind : Dante indeed more than any other poet, and with greater success. But the Greek poets, as writers to whom no resource of awakening the sympathy of their contemporaries was unknown, were in the habitual use of this power ; and it is the study of their works (since a higher merit would probably be denied me) to which I am willing that my readers should impute this singularity.

One word is due in candour to the degree in which the study of contemporary writings may have tinged my composition, for such has been a topic of censure with regard to poems far more popular, and indeed more deservedly

popular, than mine. It is impossible that any one who inhabits the same age with such writers as those who stand in the foremost ranks of our own, can conscientiously assure himself that his language and tone of thought may not have been modified by the study of the productions of those extraordinary intellects. It is true, that, not the spirit of their genius, but the forms in which it has manifested itself, are due less to the peculiarities of their own minds than to the peculiarity of the moral and intellectual condition of the minds among which they have been produced. Thus a number of writers possess the form, whilst they want the spirit of those whom, it is alleged, they imitate; because the former is the endowment of the age in which they live, and the latter must be the uncommunicated lightning of their own mind.

The peculiar style of intense and comprehensive imagery which distinguishes the modern literature of England, has not been, as a general power, the product of the imitation of any particular writer. The mass of capabilities remains at every period materially the same; the circumstances which awaken it to action perpetually change. If England were divided into forty republics, each equal in population and extent to Athens, there is no reason to suppose but that, under institutions not more perfect than those of Athens, each would produce philosophers and poets equal to those who (if we except Shakespeare) have never been surpassed. We owe the great writers of the golden age of our literature to that fervid awakening of the public mind which shook to dust the oldest and most oppressive form of the Christian religion. We owe Milton to the progress and development of the same spirit: the sacred Milton was, let it ever be remembered, a republican, and a bold inquirer into morals and religion. The great writers of our own age are, we have reason to suppose, the companions and forerunners of some unimagined change in our social condition or the opinions which cement it. The cloud of mind is discharging its collected lightning, and the equilibrium between institutions and opinions is now restoring, or is about to be restored.

As to imitation, poetry is a mimetic art. It creates, but it creates by combination and representation. Poetical abstractions are beautiful and new, not because the portions of which they are composed had no previous existence in the mind of man or in nature, but because the whole produced by their combination has some intelligible and beautiful analogy with those sources of emotion and thought, and with the contemporary condition of them: one great poet is a masterpiece of nature which another not only ought to study but must study. He might as wisely and as easily determine that his mind should no longer be the mirror of all that is lovely in the visible universe, as exclude from his contemplation the beautiful which exists in the writings of a great contemporary. The pretence of doing it would be a presumption in any but the greatest; the effect, even in him, would be strained, unnatural, and ineffectual. A poet is the combined product of such internal powers as modify the nature of others; and of such external influences as excite and sustain these powers; he is not one, but both. Every man's mind is, in this respect, modified by all the objects of nature and art; by every word and every suggestion which he ever admitted to act upon his consciousness; it is the mirror upon which all forms are reflected, and in which they compose one form. Poets, not otherwise than philosophers, painters, sculptors, and musicians, are, in one sense, the creators, and, in another, the creations, of their age. From this subjection the loftiest do not escape. There is a similarity

between Homer and Hesiod, between Æschylus and Euripides, between Virgil and Horace, between Dante and Petrarch, between Shakespeare and Fletcher, between Dryden and Pope; each has a generic resemblance under which their specific distinctions are arranged. If this similarity be the result of imitation, I am willing to confess that I have imitated.

Let this opportunity be conceded to me of acknowledging that I have, what a Scotch philosopher characteristically terms, 'a passion for reforming the world:' what passion incited him to write and publish his book, he omits to explain. For my part I had rather be damned with Plato and Lord Bacon, than go to Heaven with Paley and Malthus. But it is a mistake to suppose that I dedicate my poetical compositions solely to the direct enforcement of reform, or that I consider them in any degree as containing a reasoned system on the theory of human life. Didactic poetry is my abhorrence; nothing can be equally well expressed in prose that is not tedious and supererogatory in verse. My purpose has hitherto been simply to familiarise the highly refined imagination of the more select classes of poetical readers with beautiful idealisms of moral excellence; aware that until the mind can love, and admire, and trust, and hope, and endure, reasoned principles of moral conduct are seeds cast upon the highway of life which the unconscious passenger tramples into dust, although they would bear the harvest of his happiness. Should I live to accomplish what I purpose, that is, produce a systematical history of what appear to me to be the genuine elements of human society, let not the advocates of injustice and superstition flatter themselves that I should take Æschylus rather than Plato as my model.

The having spoken of myself with unaffected freedom will need little apology with the candid; and let the uncandid consider that they injure me less than their own hearts and minds by misrepresentation. Whatever talents a person may possess to amuse and instruct others, be they ever so inconsiderable, he is yet bound to exert them: if his attempt be ineffectual, let the punishment of an unaccomplished purpose have been sufficient; let none trouble themselves to heap the dust of oblivion upon his efforts; the pile they raise will betray his grave which might otherwise have been unknown.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

PROMETHEUS.	APOLLO.	HERCULES.
DEMOGORGON.	MERCURY.	THE PHANTASM OF JUPITER.
JUPITER.	ASIA	THE SPIRIT OF THE EARTH.
THE EARTH	PANTHEA	THE SPIRIT OF THE MOON.
OCEAN.	IONE	SPIRITS OF THE HOURS.
	SPIRITS. ECHOES. FAUNS. FURIES.	

ACT I

SCENE.—*A Ravine of Icy Rocks in the Indian Caucasus. PROMETHEUS is discovered bound to the Precipice. PANTHEA and IONE are seated at his feet. Time, night. During the Scene, morning slowly breaks.*

Prometheus. Monarch of Gods and Dæmons, and all Spirits
But One, who throng those bright and rolling worlds
Which Thou and I alone of living things
Behold with sleepless eyes! regard this Earth
Made multitudinous with thy slaves, whom thou

Requiest for knee-worship, prayer, and praise,
 And toil, and hecatombs of broken hearts,
 With fear and self-contempt and barren hope.
 Whilst me, who am thy foe, eyeless in hate,
 Hast thou made reign and triumph, to thy scorn, 10
 O'er mine own misery and thy vain revenge.
 Three thousand years of sleep-unsheltered hours,
 And moments aye divided by keen pangs
 Till they seemed years, torture and solitude,
 Scorn and despair,—these are mine empire:— 15
 More glorious far than that which thou surveyest
 From thine unenvied throne, O Mighty God!
 Almighty, had I deigned to share the shame
 Of thine ill tyranny, and hung not here
 Nailed to this wall of eagle-baffling mountain, 20
 Black, wintry, dead, unmeasured; without herb,
 Insect, or beast, or shape or sound of life.
 Ah me! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever!

No change, no pause, no hope! Yet I endure.
 I ask the Earth, have not the mountains felt? 25
 I ask yon Heaven, the all-beholding Sun,
 Has it not seen? The Sea, in storm or calm,
 Heaven's ever-changing Shadow, spread below,
 Have its deaf waves not heard my agony?
 Ah me! alas, pain, pain ever, for ever! 30

The crawling glaciers pierce me with the spears
 Of their moon-freezing crystals, the bright chains
 Eat with their burning cold into my bones.
 Heaven's wingèd hound, polluting from thy lips
 His beak in poison not his own, tears up 35
 My heart; and shapeless sights come wandering by,
 The ghastly people of the realm of dream,
 Mocking me: and the Earthquake-fiends are charged
 To wrench the rivets from my quivering wounds
 When the rocks split and close again behind: 40
 While from their loud abysses howling throng
 The genii of the storm, urging the rage
 Of whirlwind, and afflict me with keen hail.
 And yet to me welcome is day and night,
 Whether one breaks the hoar frost of the morn,
 Or starry, dim, and slow, the other climbs 45
 The leaden-coloured east; for then they lead
 The wingless, crawling hours, one among whom
 —As some dark Priest hailes the reluctant victim
 Shall drag thee, cruel King, to kiss the blood 50
 From these pale feet, which then might trample thee
 If they disdained not such a prostrate slave.
 Disdain! Ah no! I pity thee. What ruin

Will hunt thee undefended through wide Heaven!
 How will thy soul, cloven to its depth with terror,
 Gape like a hell within! I speak in grief, 55
 Not exultation, for I hate no more,
 As then ere misery made me wise. The curse
 Once breathed on thee I would recall. Ye Mountains,
 Whose many-voicèd Echoes, through the mist 60
 Of cataracts, flung the thunder of that spell!
 Ye icy Springs, stagnant with wrinkling frost,
 Which vibrated to hear me, and then crept
 Shuddering through India! Thou serenest Air,
 Through which the Sun walks burning without beams! 65
 And ye swift Whirlwinds, who on poisèd wings
 Hung mute and moveless o'er yon hushed abyss,
 As thunder, louder than your own, made rock
 The orbèd world! If then my words had power,
 Though I am changed so that aught evil wish 70
 Is dead within; although no memory be
 Of what is hate, let them not lose it now!
 What was that curse? for ye all heard me speak.

First Voice (from the Mountains).

Thrice three hundred thousand years
 O'er the Earthquake's couch we stood: 75
 Oft, as men convulsed with fears,
 We trembled in our multitude.

Second Voice (from the Springs).

Thunderbolts had parched our water,
 We had been stained with bitter blood,
 And had run mute, 'mid shrieks of slaughter, 80
 Thro' a city and a solitude.

Third Voice (from the Air).

I had clothed, since Earth uprose,
 Its wastes in colours not their own,
 And oft had my serene repose
 Been cloven by many a rending groan. 85

Fourth Voice (from the Whirlwinds).

We had soared beneath these mountains
 Unresting ages; nor had thunder,
 Nor yon volcano's flaming fountains,
 Nor any power above or under
 Ever made us mute with wonder. 90

First Voice.

But never bowed our snowy crest
 As at the voice of thine unrest.

54 thro' wide B; thro' the wide 1820.

Second Voice.

Never such a sound before
 To the Indian waves we bore.
 A pilot asleep on the howling sea 95
 Leaped up from the deck in agony,
 And heard, and cried, 'Ah, woe is me!'
 And died as mad as the wild waves be.

Third Voice.

By such dread words from Earth to Heaven
 My still realm was never riven: 100
 When its wound was closed, there stood
 Darkness o'er the day like blood.

Fourth Voice.

And we shrank back: for dreams of ruin
 To frozen caves our flight pursuing
 Made us keep silence—thus—and thus— 105
 Though silence is as hell to us.

The Earth. The tongueless Caverns of the craggy hills
 Cried, 'Misery!' then; the hollow Heaven replied,
 'Misery!' And the Ocean's purple waves,
 Climbing the land, howled to the lashing winds, 110
 And the pale nations heard it, 'Misery!'

Prometheus. I heard a sound of voices: not the voice
 Which I gave forth. Mother, thy sons and thou
 Scorn him, without whose all-enduring will
 Beneath the fierce omnipotence of Jove, 115
 Both they and thou had vanished, like thin mist
 Unrolled on the morning wind. Know ye not me,
 The Titan? He who made his agony
 The barrier to your else all-conquering foe?
 Oh, rock-embosomed lawns, and snow-fed streams, 120
 Now seen athwart frore vapours, deep below,
 Through whose o'ershadowing woods I wandered once
 With Asia, drinking life from her loved eyes;
 Why scorns the spirit which informs ye, now
 To commune with me? me alone, who checked, 125
 As one who checks a fiend-drawn charioteer,
 The falsehood and the force of him who reigns
 Supreme, and with the groans of pining slaves
 Fills your dim glens and liquid wildernesses:
 Why answer ye not, still? Brethren!

The Earth. They dare not. 130

Prometheus. Who dares? for I would hear that curse again.
 Ha, what an awful whisper rises up!
 'Tis scarce like sound: it tingles through the frame
 As lightning tingles, hovering ere it strike.

106 as hell 1839, B; a hell 1820.

Speak, Spirit! from thine inorganic voice
 I only know that thou art moving near
 And love. How cursed I him? 135

The Earth. How canst thou hear
 Who knowest not the language of the dead?

Prometheus. Thou art a living spirit; speak as they.

The Earth. I dare not speak like life, lest Heaven's fell King
 Should hear, and link me to some wheel of pain 141
 More torturing than the one whereon I roll.
 Subtle thou art and good, and though the Gods
 Hear not this voice, yet thou art more than God,
 Being wise and kind: earnestly hearken now. 145

Prometheus. Obscurely through my brain, like shadows dim,
 Sweep awful thoughts, rapid and thick. I feel
 Faint, like one mingled in entwining love;
 Yet 'tis not pleasure.

The Earth. No, thou canst not hear:
 Thou art immortal, and this tongue is known 150
 Only to those who die.

Prometheus. And what art thou,
 O, melancholy Voice?

The Earth. I am the Earth,
 Thy mother; she within whose stony veins,
 To the last fibre of the loftiest tree
 Whose thin leaves trembled in the frozen air, 155
 Joy ran, as blood within a living frame,
 When thou didst from her bosom, like a cloud
 Of glory, arise, a spirit of keen joy!
 And at thy voice her pining sons uplifted
 Their prostrate brows from the polluting dust, 160
 And our almighty Tyrant with fierce dread
 Grew pale, until his thunder chained thee here.
 Then, see those million worlds which burn and roll
 Around us: their inhabitants beheld
 My spherèd light wane in wide Heaven; the sea 165
 Was lifted by strange tempest, and new fire
 From earthquake-rifted mountains of bright snow
 Shook its portentous hair beneath Heaven's frown;
 Lightning and Inundation vexed the plains;
 Blue thistles bloomed in cities; foodless toads 170
 Within voluptuous chambers panting crawled:
 When Plague had fallen on man, and beast, and worm,
 And Famine; and black blight on herb and tree;
 And in the corn, and vines, and meadow-grass,
 Teemed ineradicable poisonous weeds 175
 Draining their growth, for my wan breast was dry
 With grief; and the thin air, my breath was stained
 With the contagion of a mother's hate
 Breathed on her child's destroyer; ay, I heard

Thy curse, the which, if thou rememberest not, 180
 Yet my innumerable seas and streams,
 Mountains, and caves, and winds, and yon wide air,
 And the inarticulate people of the dead,
 Preserve, a treasured spell. We meditate
 In secret joy and hope those dreadful words, 185
 But dare not speak them.

Prometheus. Venerable mother!

All else who live and suffer take from thee
 Some comfort; flowers, and fruits, and happy sounds,
 And love, though fleeting; these may not be mine.
 But mine own words, I pray, deny me not. 190

The Earth. They shall be told. Ere Babylon was dust,
 The Magus Zoroaster, my dead child,
 Met his own image walking in the garden.
 That apparition, sole of men, he saw.
 For know there are two worlds of life and death: 195
 One that which thou beholdest; but the other
 Is underneath the grave, where do inhabit
 The shadows of all forms that think and live
 Till death unite them and they part no more;
 Dreams and the light imaginings of men, 200
 And all that faith creates or love desires,
 Terrible, strange, sublime and beauteous shapes.
 There thou art, and dost hang, a writhing shade,
 'Mid whirlwind-peopled mountains; all the gods
 Are there, and all the powers of nameless worlds, 205
 Vast, sceptred phantoms; heroes, men, and beasts;
 And Demogorgon, a tremendous gloom;
 And he, the supreme Tyrant, on his throne
 Of burning gold. Son, one of these shall utter
 The curse which all remember. Call at will 210
 Thine own ghost, or the ghost of Jupiter,
 Hades or Typhon, or what mightier Gods
 From all-prolific Evil, since thy ruin
 Have sprung, and trampled on my prostrate sons.
 Ask, and they must reply: so the revenge 215
 Of the Supreme may sweep through vacant shades,
 As rainy wind through the abandoned gate
 Of a fallen palace.

Prometheus. Mother, let not aught
 Of that which may be evil, pass again
 My lips, or those of aught resembling me. 220
 Phantasm of Jupiter, arise, appear!

Ione.

My wings are folded o'er mine ears:
 My wings are crossèd o'er mine eyes:
 Yet through their silver shade appears,
 And through their lulling plumes arise, 225

A Shape, a throng of sounds;
 May it be no ill to thee
 O thou of many wounds!
 Near whom, for our sweet sister's sake,
 Ever thus we watch and wake.

230

Panthea.

The sound is of whirlwind underground,
 Earthquake, and fire, and mountains cloven;
 The shape is awful like the sound,
 Clothed in dark purple, star-inwoven.
 A sceptre of pale gold
 To stay steps proud, o'er the slow cloud
 His veined hand doth hold.
 Cruel he looks, but calm and strong,
 Like one who does, not suffers wrong.

235

Phantasm of Jupiter. Why have the secret powers of this strange world
 Driven me, a frail and empty phantom, hither
 On direst storms? What unaccustomed sounds
 Are hovering on my lips, unlike the voice
 With which our pallid race hold ghastly talk
 In darkness? And, proud sufferer, who art thou?

241

245

Prometheus. Tremendous Image, as thou art must be
 He whom thou shadowest forth. I am his foe,
 The Titan. Speak the words which I would hear,
 Although no thought inform thine empty voice.

The Earth. Listen! And though your echoes must be mute,
 Gray mountains, and old woods, and haunted springs,
 Prophetic caves, and isle-surrounding streams,
 Rejoice to hear what yet ye cannot speak.

250

Phantasm. A spirit seizes me and speaks within:
 It tears me as fire tears a thunder-cloud.

255

Panthea. See, how he lifts his mighty looks, the Heaven
 Darkens above.

Ione. He speaks! O shelter me!

Prometheus. I see the curse on gestures proud and cold,
 And looks of firm defiance, and calm hate,
 And such despair as mocks itself with smiles,
 Written as on a scroll: yet speak: Oh, speak!

260

Phantasm.

Fiend, I defy thee! with a calm, fixed mind,
 All that thou canst inflict I bid thee do;
 Foul Tyrant both of Gods and Human-kind,
 One only being shalt thou not subdue.
 Rain then thy plagues upon me here,
 Ghastly disease, and frenzying fear;
 And let alternate frost and fire
 Eat into me, and be thine ire
 Lightning, and cutting hail, and legioned forms
 Of furies, driving by upon the wounding storms.

265

270

Ay, do thy worst. Thou art omnipotent.

O'er all things but thyself I gave thee power,
And my own will. Be thy swift mischiefs sent
To blast mankind, from yon ethereal tower.

275

Let thy malignant spirit move

In darkness over those I love:

On me and mine I imprecate

The utmost torture of thy hate;

And thus devote to sleepless agony,

280

This undeclining head while thou must reign on high.

But thou, who art the God and Lord: O, thou,

Who fillest with thy soul this world of woe,

To whom all things of Earth and Heaven do bow

In fear and worship: all-prevailing foe!

285

I curse thee! let a sufferer's curse

Clasp thee, his torturer, like remorse;

Till thine Infinity shall be

A robe of envenomed agony;

And thine Omnipotence a crown of pain,

290

To cling like burning gold round thy dissolving brain.

Heap on thy soul, by virtue of this Curse,

Ill deeds, then be thou damned, beholding good;

Both infinite as is the universe,

And thou, and thy self-torturing solitude.

295

An awful image of calm power

Though now thou sittest, let the hour

Come, when thou must appear to be

That which thou art internally;

And after many a false and fruitless crime

300

Scorn track thy lagging fall through boundless space and time.

Prometheus. Were these my words, O Parent?

The Earth.

They were thine.

Prometheus. It doth repent me: words are quick and vain;

Grief for awhile is blind, and so was mine.

I wish no living thing to suffer pain.

305

The Earth.

Misery, Oh misery to me,

That Jove at length should vanquish thee.

Wail, howl aloud, Land and Sea,

The Earth's rent heart shall answer ye.

Howl, Spirits of the living and the dead,

310

Your refuge, your defence lies fallen and vanquishèd.

First Echo.

Lies fallen and vanquishèd!

Second Echo.

Fallen and vanquishèd!

Ione.

Fear not: 'tis but some passing spasm,
 The Titan is unvanquished still. 315
 But see, where through the azure chasm
 Of yon forked and snowy hill
 Trampling the slant winds on high
 With golden-sandalled feet, that glow
 Under plumes of purple dye, 320
 Like rose-ensanguined ivory,
 A Shape comes now,
 Stretching on high from his right hand
 A serpent-cinctured wand.

Panthea. 'Tis Jove's world-wandering herald, Mercury. 325

Ione.

And who are those with hydra tresses
 And iron wings that climb the wind,
 Whom the frowning God represses
 Like vapours steaming up behind,
 Clanging loud, an endless crowd— 330

Panthea.

These are Jove's tempest-walking hounds,
 Whom he gluts with groans and blood,
 When charioted on sulphurous cloud
 He bursts Heaven's bounds.

Ione.

Are they now led, from the thin dead 335
 On new pangs to be fed?

Panthea.

The Titan looks as ever, firm, not proud.

First Fury. Ha! I scent life!

Second Fury. Let me but look into his eyes!

Third Fury. The hope of torturing him smells like a heap
 Of corpses, to a death-bird after battle. 340

First Fury. Darest thou delay, O Herald! take cheer, Hounds
 Of Hell: what if the Son of Maia soon
 Should make us food and sport—who can please long
 The Omnipotent?

Mercury. Back to your towers of iron,
 And gnash, beside the streams of fire and wail, 345
 Your foodless teeth. Geryon, arise! and Gorgon,
 Chimæra, and thou Sphinx, subtlest of fiends
 Who ministered to Thebes Heaven's poisoned wine,
 Unnatural love, and more unnatural hate:
 These shall perform your task.

First Fury. Oh, mercy! mercy! 350
 We die with our desire: drive us not back!

Mercury. Crouch then in silence.

Awful Sufferer!

To thee unwilling, most unwillingly
 I come, by the great Father's will driven down,
 To execute a doom of new revenge. 355
 Alas! I pity thee, and hate myself
 That I can do no more: aye from thy sight
 Returning, for a season, Heaven seems Hell,
 So thy worn form pursues me night and day,
 Smiling reproach. Wise art thou, firm and good, 360
 But vainly wouldst stand forth alone in strife
 Against the Omnipotent; as yon clear lamps
 That measure and divide the weary years
 From which there is no refuge, long have taught
 And long must teach. Even now thy Torturer arms 365
 With the strange might of unimagined pains
 The powers who scheme slow agonies in Hell,
 And my commission is to lead them here,
 Or what more subtle, foul, or savage fiends
 People the abyss, and leave them to their task. 370
 Be it not so! there is a secret known
 To thee, and to none else of living things,
 Which may transfer the sceptre of wide Heaven,
 The fear of which perplexes the Supreme:
 Clothe it in words, and bid it clasp his throne 375
 In intercession; bend thy soul in prayer,
 And like a suppliant in some gorgeous fane,
 Let the will kneel within thy haughty heart:
 For benefits and meek submission tame
 The fiercest and the mightiest.

Prometheus.

Evil minds

380

Change good to their own nature. I gave all
 He has; and in return he chains me here
 Years, ages, night and day: whether the Sun
 Split my parched skin, or in the moony night
 The crystal-wingèd snow cling round my hair: 385
 Whilst my belovèd race is trampled down
 By his thought-executing ministers.
 Such is the tyrant's recompense: 'tis just:
 He who is evil can receive no good;
 And for a world bestowed, or a friend lost, 390
 He can feel hate, fear, shame; not gratitude:
 He but requites me for his own misdeed.
 Kindness to such is keen reproach, which breaks
 With bitter stings the light sleep of Revenge.
 Submission, thou dost know I cannot try: 395
 For what submission but that fatal word,
 The death-seal of mankind's captivity,
 Like the Sicilian's hair-suspended sword,
 Which trembles o'er his crown, would he accept,

Or could I yield? Which yet I will not yield.
 Let others flatter Crime, where it sits throned
 In brief Omnipotence: secure are they:

For Justice, when triumphant, will weep down
 Pity, not punishment, on her own wrongs,
 Too much avenged by those who err. I wait,
 Enduring thus, the retributive hour
 Which since we spake is even nearer now.

But hark, the hell-hounds clamour: fear delay:
 Behold! Heaven lowers under thy Father's frown.

Mercury. Oh, that we might be spared: I to inflict
 And thou to suffer! Once more answer me:

Thou knowest not the period of Jove's power?

Prometheus. I know but this, that it must come.

Mercury. Alas!

Thou canst not count thy years to come of pain?

Prometheus. They last while Jove must reign: nor more, nor less
 Do I desire or fear.

Mercury. Yet pause, and plunge
 Into Eternity, where recorded time,
 Even all that we imagine, age on age,
 Seems but a point, and the reluctant mind
 Flags wearily in its unending flight,

Till it sink, dizzy, blind, lost, shelterless;
 Perchance it has not numbered the slow years
 Which thou must spend in torture, unreprieved?

Prometheus. Perchance no thought can count them, yet they pass.

Mercury. If thou might'st dwell among the Gods the while
 Lapped in voluptuous joy?

Prometheus. I would not quit
 This bleak ravine, these unrepentant pains.

Mercury. Alas! I wonder at, yet pity thee.

Prometheus. Pity the self-despising slaves of Heaven,
 Not me, within whose mind sits peace serene,
 As light in the sun, throned: how vain is talk!
 Call up the fiends.

Ione. O, sister, look! White fire
 Has cloven to the roots yon huge snow-loaded cedar;
 How fearfully God's thunder howls behind!

Mercury. I must obey his words and thine: alas!
 Most heavily remorse hangs at my heart!

Panthea. See where the child of Heaven, with wingèd feet,
 Runs down the slanted sunlight of the dawn.

Ione. Dear sister, close thy plumes over thine eyes
 Lest thou behold and die: they come: they come
 Blackening the birth of day with countless wings,
 And hollow underneath, like death.

First Fury. Prometheus!

Second Fury. Immortal Titan!

Third Fury. Champion of Heaven's slaves!

Prometheus. He whom some dreadful voice invokes is here,
 Prometheus, the chained Titan. Horrible forms, 445
 What and who are ye? Never yet there came
 Phantasms so foul through monster-teeming Hell
 From the all-miscreative brain of Jove;
 Whilst I behold such execrable shapes,
 Methinks I grow like what I contemplate, 450
 And laugh and stare in loathsome sympathy.

First Fury. We are the ministers of pain, and fear,
 And disappointment, and mistrust, and hate,
 And clinging crime; and as lean dogs pursue
 Through wood and lake some struck and sobbing fawn, 455
 We track all things that weep, and bleed, and live,
 When the great King betrays them to our will.

Prometheus. Oh! many fearful natures in one name,
 I know ye; and these lakes and echoes know
 The darkness and the clangour of your wings. 460
 But why more hideous than your loathèd selves
 Gather ye up in legions from the deep?

Second Fury. We knew not that: Sisters, rejoice, rejoice!

Prometheus. Can aught exult in its deformity?

Second Fury. The beauty of delight makes lovers glad, 465
 Gazing on one another: so are we.
 As from the rose which the pale priestess kneels
 To gather for her festal crown of flowers
 The æreal crimson falls, flushing her cheek,
 So from our victim's destined agony 470
 The shade which is our form invests us round,
 Else we are shapeless as our mother Night.

Prometheus. I laugh your power, and his who sent you here,
 To lowest scorn. Pour forth the cup of pain.

First Fury. Thou thinkest we will rend thee bone from bone, 475
 And nerve from nerve, working like fire within?

Prometheus. Pain is my element, as hate is thine;
 Ye rend me now: I care not.

Second Fury. Dost imagine
 We will but laugh into thy lidless eyes?

Prometheus. I weigh not what ye do, but what ye suffer, 480
 Being evil. Cruel was the power which called
 You, or aught else so wretched, into light.

Third Fury. Thou think'st we will live through thee, one by one,
 Like animal life, and though we can obscure not
 The soul which burns within, that we will dwell 485
 Beside it, like a vain loud multitude
 Vexing the self-content of wisest men:
 That we will be dread thought beneath thy brain,
 And foul desire round thine astonished heart,
 And blood within thy labyrinthine veins 490
 Crawling like agony?

Prometheus. Why, ye are thus now;

Yet am I king over myself, and rule
 The torturing and conflicting throngs within,
 As Jove rules you when Hell grows mutinous.

Chorus of Furies.

From the ends of the earth, from the ends of the earth,
 Where the night has its grave and the morning its birth, 495

Come, come, come!

Oh, ye who shake hills with the scream of your mirth,
 When cities sink howling in ruin; and ye
 Who with wingless footsteps trample the sea,
 And close upon Shipwreck and Famine's track, 500
 Sit chattering with joy on the foodless wreck;

Come, come, come!

Leave the bed, low, cold, and red,
 Strewed beneath a nation dead; 505

Leave the hatred, as in ashes

Fire is left for future burning:

It will burst in bloodier flashes

When ye stir it, soon returning:

Leave the self-contempt implanted 510

In young spirits, sense-enchanted,

Misery's yet unkindled fuel:

Leave Hell's secrets half unchanted

To the maniac dreamer; cruel

More than ye can be with hate 515

Is he with fear.

Come, come, come!

We are steaming up from Hell's wide gate
 And we burthen the blast of the atmosphere,
 But vainly we toil till ye come here. 520

Ione. Sister, I hear the thunder of new wings.

Panthea. These solid mountains quiver with the sound
 Even as the tremulous air: their shadows make
 The space within my plumes more black than night.

First Fury.

Your call was as a wingèd car
 Driven on whirlwinds fast and far; 525
 It rapped us from red gulfs of war.

Second Fury.

From wide cities, famine-wasted;

Third Fury.

Groans half heard, and blood untasted;

Fourth Fury.

Kingly conclaves stern and cold, 530
 Where blood with gold is bought and sold:

Fifth Fury.

From the furnace, white and hot,
In which—

A Fury.

Speak not: whisper not:
I know all that ye would tell,
But to speak might break the spell
Which must bend the Invincible,
The stern of thought;
He yet defies the deepest power of Hell.

535

A Fury.

Tear the veil!

Another Fury.

It is torn.

Chorus.

The pale stars of the morn

Shine on a misery, dire to be borne. 540
Dost thou faint, mighty Titan? We laugh thee to scorn.
Dost thou boast the clear knowledge thou waken'dst for man?
Then was kindled within him a thirst which outran
Those perishing waters; a thirst of fierce fever,
Hope, love, doubt, desire, which consume him for ever. 545

One came forth of gentle worth
Smiling on the sanguine earth;
His words outlived him, like swift poison
Withering up truth, peace, and pity.
Look! where round the wide horizon 550

Many a million-peopled city
Vomits smoke in the bright air.
Hark that outcry of despair!
'Tis his mild and gentle ghost
Wailing for the faith he kindled: 555
Look again, the flames almost

To a glow-worm's lamp have dwindled:
The survivors round the embers
Gather in dread.

Joy, joy, joy!

560

Past ages crowd on thee, but each one remembers,
And the future is dark, and the present is spread
Like a pillow of thorns for thy slumberless head.

Semichorus I.

Drops of bloody agony flow
From his white and quivering brow. 565
Grant a little respite now:
See a disenchanted nation
Springs like day from desolation;

To Truth its state is dedicate,
 And Freedom leads it forth, her mate;
 A legioned band of linkèd brothers
 Whom Love calls children—

Semichorus II.

'Tis another's:

See how kindred murder kin:
 'Tis the vintage-time for death and sin:
 Blood, like new wine, bubbles within:
 Till Despair smothers

The struggling world, which slaves and tyrants win.

[*All the FURIES vanish, except one.*]

Ione. Hark, sister! what a low yet dreadful groan
 Quite unsuppressed is tearing up the heart
 Of the good Titan, as storms tear the deep,
 And beasts hear the sea moan in inland caves.
 Darest thou observe how the fiends torture him?

Panthea. Alas! I looked forth twice, but will no more.

Ione. What didst thou see?

Panthea. A woful sight: a youth
 With patient looks nailed to a crucifix.

Ione. What next?

Panthea. The heaven around, the earth below
 Was peopled with thick shapes of human death,
 All horrible, and wrought by human hands,
 And some appeared the work of human hearts,
 For men were slowly killed by frowns and smiles:
 And other sights too foul to speak and live
 Were wandering by. Let us not tempt worse fear
 By looking forth: those groans are grief enough.

Fury. Behold an emblem: those who do endure
 Deep wrongs for man, and scorn, and chains, but heap
 Thousandfold torment on themselves and him.

Prometheus. Remit the anguish of that lighted stare;
 Close those wan lips; let that thorn-wounded brow
 Stream not with blood; it mingles with thy tears!
 Fix, fix those tortured orbs in peace and death,
 So thy sick throes shake not that crucifix,
 So those pale fingers play not with thy gore.
 O, horrible! Thy name I will not speak,
 It hath become a curse. I see, I see
 The wise, the mild, the lofty, and the just,
 Whom thy slaves hate for being like to thee,
 Some hunted by foul lies from their heart's home,
 An early-chosen, late-lamented home;
 As hooded ounces cling to the driven hind;
 Some linked to corpses in unwholesome cells:
 Some—Hear I not the multitude laugh loud?—

Impaled in lingering fire: and mighty realms
 Float by my feet, like sea-uprooted isles,
 Whose sons are kneaded down in common blood
 By the red light of their own burning homes.

615

Fury. Blood thou canst see, and fire; and canst hear groans;
 Worse things, unheard, unseen, remain behind.

Prometheus. Worse?

Fury. In each human heart terror survives
 The ravin it has gorged: the loftiest fear
 All that they would disdain to think were true:
 Hypocrisy and custom make their minds
 The fanes of many a worship, now outworn.
 They dare not devise good for man's estate,
 And yet they know not that they do not dare.
 The good want power, but to weep barren tears.
 The powerful goodness want: worse need for them.
 The wise want love; and those who love want wisdom;
 And all best things are thus confused to ill.
 Many are strong and rich, and would be just,
 But live among their suffering fellow-men
 As if none felt: they know not what they do.

620

625

630

Prometheus. Thy words are like a cloud of wingèd snakes;
 And yet I pity those they torture not.

Fury. Thou pitiest them? I speak no more!

[*Vanishes.*

Prometheus.

Ah woe!

Ah woe! Alas! pain, pain ever, for ever!
 I close my tearless eyes, but see more clear
 Thy works within my woe-illumèd mind,
 Thou subtle tyrant! Peace is in the grave.
 The grave hides all things beautiful and good:
 I am a God and cannot find it there,
 Nor would I seek it: for, though dread revenge,
 This is defeat, fierce king, not victory.
 The sights with which thou torturest gird my soul
 With new endurance, till the hour arrives
 When they shall be no types of things which are.

635

640

645

Panthea. Alas! what sawest thou more?

Prometheus.

There are two woes:

To speak, and to behold; thou spare me one.
 Names are there, Nature's sacred watchwords, they
 Were borne aloft in bright emblazonry;
 The nations thronged around, and cried aloud,
 As with one voice, Truth, liberty, and love!
 Suddenly fierce confusion fell from heaven
 Among them: there was strife, deceit, and fear:
 Tyrants rushed in, and did divide the spoil.
 This was the shadow of the truth I saw.

650

655

The Earth. I felt thy torture, son; with such mixed joy
 As pain and virtue give. To cheer thy state

I bid ascend those subtle and fair spirits,
 Whose homes are the dim caves of human thought,
 And who inhabit, as birds wing the wind, 660
 Its world-surrounding aether: they behold
 Beyond that twilight realm, as in a glass,
 The future: may they speak comfort to thee!

Panthea. Look, sister, where a troop of spirits gather,
 Like flocks of clouds in spring's delightful weather, 665
 Thronging in the blue air!

Ione. And see! more come,
 Like fountain-vapours when the winds are dumb,
 That climb up the ravine in scattered lines.
 And, hark! is it the music of the pines?
 Is it the lake? Is it the waterfall? 670

Panthea. 'Tis something sadder, sweeter far than all.

Chorus of Spirits.

From unremembered ages we
 Gentle guides and guardians be
 Of heaven-oppressed mortality;
 And we breathe, and sicken not, 675
 The atmosphere of human thought:
 Be it dim, and dank, and gray,
 Like a storm-extinguished day,
 Travelled o'er by dying gleams;
 Be it bright as all between 680
 Cloudless skies and windless streams,
 Silent, liquid, and serene;
 As the birds within the wind,
 As the fish within the wave,
 As the thoughts of man's own mind 685
 Float through all above the grave;
 We make there our liquid lair,
 Voyaging cloudlike and unpent
 Through the boundless element:
 Thence we bear the prophecy 690
 Which begins and ends in thee!

Ione. More yet come, one by one: the air around them
 Looks radiant as the air around a star.

First Spirit.

On a battle-trumpet's blast
 I fled hither, fast, fast, fast, 695
 'Mid the darkness upward cast.
 From the dust of creeds outworn,
 From the tyrant's banner torn,
 Gathering 'round me, onward borne,
 There was mingled many a cry— 700
 Freedom! Hope! Death! Victory!
 Till they faded through the sky;

And one sound, above, around,
 One sound beneath, around, above,
 Was moving; 'twas the soul of Love;
 'Twas the hope, the prophecy,
 Which begins and ends in thee.

705

Second Spirit.

A rainbow's arch stood on the sea,
 Which rocked beneath, immovably;
 And the triumphant storm did flee,
 Like a conqueror, swift and proud,
 Between, with many a captive cloud,
 A shapeless, dark and rapid crowd,
 Each by lightning riven in half:
 I heard the thunder hoarsely laugh:
 Mighty fleets were strewn like chaff
 And spread beneath a hell of death
 O'er the white waters. I alit
 On a great ship lightning-split,
 And speeded hither on the sigh
 Of one who gave an enemy
 His plank, then plunged aside to die.

710

715

720

Third Spirit.

I sate beside a sage's bed,
 And the lamp was burning red
 Near the book where he had fed,
 When a Dream with plumes of flame.
 To his pillow hovering came,
 And I knew it was the same
 Which had kindled long ago
 Pity, eloquence, and woe;
 And the world awhile below
 Wore the shade, its lustre made.
 It has borne me here as fleet
 As Desire's lightning feet:
 I must ride it back ere morrow,
 Or the sage will wake in sorrow.

725

730

735

Fourth Spirit.

On a poet's lips I slept
 Dreaming like a love-adept
 In the sound his breathing kept;
 Nor seeks nor finds he mortal blisses,
 But feeds on the aéreal kisses
 Of shapes that haunt thought's wildernesses.
 He will watch from dawn to gloom
 The lake-reflected sun illumine
 The yellow bees in the ivy-bloom,

740

745

Nor heed nor see, what things they be;
 But from these create he can
 Forms more real than living man,
 Nurslings of immortality!
 One of these awakened me,
 And I sped to succour thee.

750

Ione.

Behold'st thou not two shapes from the east and west
 Come, as two doves to one belovèd nest,
 Twin nurslings of the all-sustaining air
 On swift still wings glide down the atmosphere?
 And, hark! their sweet, sad voices! 'tis despair
 Mingled with love and then dissolved in sound.

755

Panthea. Canst thou speak, sister? all my words are drowned.

Ione. Their beauty gives me voice. See how they float
 On their sustaining wings of skiey grain,
 Orange and azure deepening into gold:
 Their soft smiles light the air like a star's fire.

760

Chorus of Spirits.

Hast thou beheld the form of Love?

Fifth Spirit.

As over wide dominions

I sped, like some swift cloud that wings the wide air's wildernesses,
 That planet-crested shape swept by on lightning-braided pinions, 765
 Scattering the liquid joy of life from his ambrosial tresses:
 His footsteps paved the world with light; but as I passed 'twas fading,
 And hollow Ruin yawned behind: great sages bound in madness,
 And headless patriots, and pale youths who perished, unupbraiding,
 Gleamed in the night. I wandered o'er, till thou, O King of sadness,
 Turned by thy smile the worst I saw to recollected gladness. 771

Sixth Spirit.

Ah, sister! Desolation is a delicate thing:

It walks not on the earth, it floats not on the air,
 But treads with lulling footstep, and fans with silent wing
 The tender hopes which in their hearts the best and gentlest bear; 775
 Who, soothed to false repose by the fanning plumes above
 And the music-stirring motion of its soft and busy feet,
 Dream visions of æreal joy, and call the monster, Love,
 And wake, and find the shadow Pain, as he whom now we greet.

Chorus.

Though Ruin now Love's shadow be,
 Following him, destroyingly,
 On Death's white and wingèd steed,
 Which the fleetest cannot flee,
 Trampling down both flower and weed,

780

774 lulling *B*; silent 1820.

Man and beast, and foul and fair,
 Like a tempest through the air;
 Thou shalt quell this horseman grim,
 Woundless though in heart or limb.

785

Prometheus. Spirits! how know ye this shall be?

Chorus.

In the atmosphere we breathe,
 As buds grow red when the snow-storms flee,
 From Spring gathering up beneath,
 Whose mild winds shake the elder brake,
 And the wandering herdsmen know
 That the white-thorn soon will blow:
 Wisdom, Justice, Love, and Peace,
 When they struggle to increase,
 Are to us as soft winds be
 To shepherd boys, the prophecy
 Which begins and ends in thee.

790

795

800

Ione. Where are the Spirits fled?

Panthea.

Only a sense

Remains of them, like the omnipotence
 Of music, when the inspired voice and lute
 Languish, ere yet the responses are mute,
 Which through the deep and labyrinthine soul,
 Like echoes through long caverns, wind and roll.

805

Prometheus. How fair these airborne shapes! and yet I feel
 Most vain all hope but love; and thou art far,
 Asia! who, when my being overflowed,
 Wert like a golden chalice to bright wine
 Which else had sunk into the thirsty dust.
 All things are still: alas! how heavily
 This quiet morning weighs upon my heart;
 Though I should dream I could even sleep with grief
 If slumber were denied not. I would fain
 Be what it is my destiny to be,
 The saviour and the strength of suffering man,
 Or sink into the original gulf of things:
 There is no agony, and no solace left;
 Earth can console, Heaven can torment no more.

810

815

820

Panthea. Hast thou forgotten one who watches thee
 The cold dark night, and never sleeps but when
 The shadow of thy spirit falls on her?

Prometheus. I said all hope was vain but love: thou lovest.

Panthea. Deeply in truth; but the eastern star looks white,
 And Asia waits in that far Indian vale,
 The scene of her sad exile; rugged once
 And desolate and frozen, like this ravine;
 But now invested with fair flowers and herbs,

825

And haunted by sweet airs and sounds, which flow
 Among the woods and waters, from the æther
 Of her transforming presence, which would fade
 If it were mingled not with thine. Farewell!

830

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II

SCENE I.—*Morning. A lovely Vale in the Indian Caucasus. ASIA alone.*

Asia. From all the blasts of heaven thou hast descended:

Yes, like a spirit, like a thought, which makes

Unwonted tears throng to the horny eyes,

And beatings haunt the desolated heart,

Which should have learnt repose: thou hast descended

5

Cradled in tempests; thou dost wake, O Spring!

O child of many winds! As suddenly

Thou comest as the memory of a dream,

Which now is sad because it hath been sweet;

Like genius, or like joy which riseth up

10

As from the earth, clothing with golden clouds

The desert of our life.

This is the season, this the day, the hour;

At sunrise thou shouldst come, sweet sister mine,

Too long desired, too long delaying, come!

15

How like death-worms the wingless moments crawl!

The point of one white star is quivering still

Deep in the orange light of widening morn

Beyond the purple mountains: through a chasm

Of wind-divided mist the darker lake

20

Reflects it: now it wanes: it gleams again

As the waves fade, and as the burning threads

Of woven cloud unravel in pale air:

'Tis lost! and through yon peaks of cloud-like snow

The roseate sunlight quivers: hear I not

25

The Æolian music of her sea-green plumes

Winnowing the crimson dawn?

[PANTHEA enters.]

I feel, I see

Those eyes which burn through smiles that fade in tears,

Like stars half quenched in mists of silver dew.

Belovèd and most beautiful, who wearest

30

The shadow of that soul by which I live,

How late thou art! the spherèd sun had climbed

The sea; my heart was sick with hope, before

The printless air felt thy belated plumes.

Panthea. Pardon, great Sister! but my wings were faint

35

With the delight of a remembered dream,

As are the noontide plumes of summer winds

Satiate with sweet flowers. I was wont to sleep

Peacefully, and awake refreshed and calm

Before the sacred Titan's fall, and thy

40

Unhappy love, had made, through use and pity,
 Both love and woe familiar to my heart
 As they had grown to thine: erewhile I slept
 Under the glaucous caverns of old Ocean
 Within dim bowers of green and purple moss, 45
 Our young Ione's soft and milky arms
 Locked then, as now, behind my dark, moist hair,
 While my shut eyes and cheek were pressed within
 The folded depth of her life-breathing bosom:
 But not as now, since I am made the wind 50
 Which fails beneath the music that I bear
 Of thy most wordless converse; since dissolved
 Into the sense with which love talks, my rest
 Was troubled and yet sweet; my waking hours
 Too full of care and pain.

Asia. Lift up thine eyes,
 And let me read thy dream. 55

Panthea. As I have said
 With our sea-sister at his feet I slept.
 The mountain mists, condensing at our voice
 Under the moon, had spread their snowy flakes,
 From the keen ice shielding our linked sleep. 60
 Then two dreams came. One, I remember not.
 But in the other his pale wound-worn limbs
 Fell from Prometheus, and the azure night
 Grew radiant with the glory of that form
 Which lives unchanged within, and his voice fell 65
 Like music which makes giddy the dim brain,
 Faint with intoxication of keen joy:
 'Sister of her whose footsteps pave the world
 With loveliness—more fair than aught but her,
 Whose shadow thou art—lift thine eyes on me.' 70
 I lifted them: the overpowering light
 Of that immortal shape was shadowed o'er
 By love; which, from his soft and flowing limbs,
 And passion-parted lips, and keen, faint eyes,
 Steamed forth like vaporous fire; an atmosphere 75
 Which wrapped me in its all-dissolving power,
 As the warm aether of the morning sun
 Wraps ere it drinks some cloud of wandering dew.
 I saw not, heard not, moved not, only felt
 His presence flow and mingle through my blood 80
 Till it became his life, and his grew mine,
 And I was thus absorbed, until it passed,
 And like the vapours when the sun sinks down,
 Gathering again in drops upon the pines,
 And tremulous as they, in the deep night 85
 My being was condensed; and as the rays
 Of thought were slowly gathered, I could hear
 His voice, whose accents lingered ere they died

Like footsteps of weak melody: thy name
 Among the many sounds alone I heard
 Of what might be articulate; though still
 I listened through the night when sound was none.
 Ione awakened then, and said to me:

90

'Canst thou divine what troubles me to-night?

I always knew what I desired before,
 Nor ever found delight to wish in vain.

95

But now I cannot tell thee what I seek;
 I know not; something sweet, since it is sweet
 Even to desire; it is thy sport, false sister;

Thou hast discovered some enchantment old,
 Whose spells have stolen my spirit as I slept
 And mingled it with thine: for when just now

100

We kissed, I felt within thy parted lips
 The sweet air that sustained me, and the warmth
 Of the life-blood, for loss of which I faint,
 Quivered between our intertwining arms.'

105

I answered not, for the Eastern star grew pale,
 But fled to thee.

Asia. Thou speakest, but thy words
 Are as the air: I feel them not: Oh, lift
 Thine eyes, that I may read his written soul!

110

Panthea. I lift them though they droop beneath the load
 Of that they would express: what canst thou see
 But thine own fairest shadow imaged there?

Asia. Thine eyes are like the deep, blue, boundless heaven
 Contracted to two circles underneath
 Their long, fine lashes; dark, far, measureless,
 Orb within orb, and line through line inwoven.

115

Panthea. Why lookest thou as if a spirit passed?

Asia. There is a change: beyond their inmost depth

I see a shade, a shape: 'tis He, arrayed
 In the soft light of his own smiles, which spread
 Like radiance from the cloud-surrounded moon.

120

Prometheus, it is thine! depart not yet!

Say not those smiles that we shall meet again
 Within that bright pavilion which their beams
 Shall build o'er the waste world? The dream is told.

125

What shape is that between us? Its rude hair
 Roughens the wind that lifts it, its regard

Is wild and quick, yet 'tis a thing of air,
 For through its gray robe gleams the golden dew
 Whose stars the noon has quenched not.

130

Dream.

Follow! Follow!

Panthea. It is mine other dream.

Asia.

It disappears.

Panthea. It passes now into my mind. Methought
 As we sate here, the flower-infolding buds

Burst on yon lightning-blasted almond-tree,
 When swift from the white Scythian wilderness
 A wind swept forth wrinkling the Earth with frost:
 I looked, and all the blossoms were blown down;
 But on each leaf was stamped, as the blue bells
 Of Hyacinth tell Apollo's written grief,
 O, FOLLOW, FOLLOW! 135 140

Asia. As you speak, your words
 Fill, pause by pause, my own forgotten sleep
 With shapes. Methought among these lawns together
 We wandered, underneath the young gray dawn,
 And multitudes of dense white fleecy clouds 145
 Were wandering in thick flocks along the mountains
 Shepherded by the slow, unwilling wind;
 And the white dew on the new-bladed grass,
 Just piercing the dark earth, hung silently;
 And there was more which I remember not: 150
 But on the shadows of the morning clouds,
 Athwart the purple mountain slope, was written
 FOLLOW, O, FOLLOW! as they vanished by;
 And on each herb, from which Heaven's dew had fallen,
 The like was stamped, as with a withering fire; 155
 A wind arose among the pines; it shook
 The clinging music from their boughs, and then
 Low, sweet, faint sounds, like the farewell of ghosts,
 Were heard: O, FOLLOW, FOLLOW, FOLLOW ME!
 And then I said: 'Panthea, look on me.' 160
 But in the depth of those beloved eyes
 Still I saw, FOLLOW, FOLLOW!

Echo. Follow, follow!

Panthea. The crags, this clear spring morning, mock our voices
 As they were spirit-tongued.

Asia. It is some being
 Around the crags. What fine clear sounds! O, list! 165

Echoes (unseen).

Echoes we: listen!

We cannot stay:

As dew-stars glisten

Then fade away—

Child of Ocean! 170

Asia. Hark! Spirits speak. The liquid responses
 Of their aerial tongues yet sound.

Panthea. I hear.

Echoes.

O, follow, follow,
 As our voice recedeth
 Through the caverns hollow,
 Where the forest spreadeth; 175

143 these B; the 1820.

(*More distant.*)

O, follow, follow!

Through the caverns hollow,
As the song floats thou pursue,
Where the wild bee never flew, 180
Through the noontide darkness deep,
By the odour-breathing sleep
Of faint night flowers, and the waves
At the fountain-lighted caves,
While our music, wild and sweet, 185
Mocks thy gently falling feet,
Child of Ocean!

Asia. Shall we pursue the sound? It grows more faint
And distant.

Panthea. List! the strain floats nearer now.

Echoes.

In the world unknown 190
Sleeps a voice unspoken;
By thy step alone
Can its rest be broken;
Child of Ocean!

Asia. How the notes sink upon the ebbing wind! 195

Echoes.

O, follow, follow!
Through the caverns hollow,
As the song floats thou pursue,
By the woodland noontide dew;
By the forest, lakes, and fountains, 200
Through the many-folded mountains;
To the rents, and gulfs, and chasms,
Where the Earth reposed from spasms,
On the day when He and thou
Parted, to commingle now; 205
Child of Ocean!

Asia. Come, sweet Panthea, link thy hand in mine,
And follow, ere the voices fade away.

SCENE II.—*A Forest, intermingled with Rocks and Caverns. ASIA and PANTHEA pass into it. Two young Fauns are sitting on a Rock listening.*

Semichorus I. of Spirits.

The path through which that lovely twain
Have passed, by cedar, pine, and yew.
And each dark tree that ever grew,
Is curtained out from Heaven's wide blue;
Nor sun, nor moon, nor wind, nor rain,

Can pierce its interwoven bowers,
 Nor aught, save where some cloud of dew,
 Drifted along the earth-creeping breeze,
 Between the trunks of the hoar trees,
 Hangs each a pearl in the pale flowers 10
 Of the green laurel, blown anew;
 And bends, and then fades silently,
 One frail and fair anemone:
 Or when some star of many a one
 That climbs and wanders through steep night, 15
 Has found the cleft through which alone
 Beams fall from high those depths upon
 Ere it is borne away, away,
 By the swift Heavens that cannot stay,
 It scatters drops of golden light, 20
 Like lines of rain that ne'er unite:
 And the gloom divine is all around,
 And underneath is the mossy ground.

Semichorus II.

There the voluptuous nightingales,
 Are awake through all the broad noonday. 25
 When one with bliss or sadness fails,
 And through the windless ivy-boughs,
 Sick with sweet love, droops dying away
 On its mate's music-panting bosom;
 Another from the swinging blossom, 30
 Watching to catch the languid close
 Of the last strain, then lifts on high
 The wings of the weak melody,
 'Till some new strain of feeling bear
 The song, and all the woods are mute; 35
 When there is heard through the dim air
 The rush of wings, and rising there
 Like many a lake-surrounded flute,
 Sounds overflow the listener's brain
 So sweet, that joy is almost pain. 40

Semichorus I.

There those enchanted eddies play
 Of echoes, music-tongued, which draw,
 By Demogorgon's mighty law,
 With melting rapture, or sweet awe,
 All spirits on that secret way; 45
 As inland boats are driven to Ocean
 Down streams made strong with mountain-thaw:
 And first there comes a gentle sound
 To those in talk or slumber bound,

38 surrounded *B*, ed. 1839; surrounding 1820.

And wakes the destined soft emotion,—
 Attracts, impels them; those who saw
 Say from the breathing earth behind
 There steams a plume-uplifting wind
 Which drives them on their path, while they
 Believe their own swift wings and feet
 The sweet desires within obey:
 And so they float upon their way,
 Until, still sweet, but loud and strong,
 The storm of sound is driven along,
 Sucked up and hurrying: as they fleet
 Behind, its gathering billows meet
 And to the fatal mountain bear
 Like clouds amid the yielding air.

First Faun. Canst thou imagine where those spirits live
 Which make such delicate music in the woods?
 We haunt within the least frequented caves
 And closest coverts, and we know these wilds,
 Yet never meet them, though we hear them oft:
 Where may they hide themselves?

Second Faun. 'Tis hard to tell:
 I have heard those more skilled in spirits say,
 The bubbles, which the enchantment of the sun
 Sucks from the pale faint water-flowers that pave
 The oozy bottom of clear lakes and pools,
 Are the pavilions where such dwell and float
 Under the green and golden atmosphere
 Which noontide kindles through the woven leaves;
 And when these burst, and the thin fiery air,
 The which they breathed within those lucent domes,
 Ascends to flow like meteors through the night,
 They ride on them, and rein their headlong speed,
 And bow their burning crests, and glide in fire
 Under the waters of the earth again.

First Faun. If such live thus, have others other lives,
 Under pink blossoms or within the bells
 Of meadow flowers, or folded violets deep,
 Or on their dying odours, when they die,
 Or in the sunlight of the spherèd dew?

Second Faun. Ay, many more which we may well divine.
 But, should we stay to speak, noontide would come,
 And thwart Silenus find his goats undrawn,
 And grudge to sing those wise and lovely songs
 Of Fate, and Chance, and God, and Chaos old,
 And Love, and the chained Titan's woful doom,
 And how he shall be loosed, and make the earth
 One brotherhood: delightful strains which cheer
 Our solitary twilights, and which charm
 To silence the unenvying nightingales.

50 destined] destined 1820. 86 on 1820; in B. 93 doom B, ed. 1839; dooms 1820.

SCENE III.—*A Pinnacle of Rock among Mountains.*

ASIA and PANTHEA.

Panthea. Hither the sound has borne us—to the realm
 Of Demogorgon, and the mighty portal,
 Like a volcano's meteor-breathing chasm,
 Whence the oracular vapour is hurled up
 Which lonely men drink wandering in their youth, 5
 And call truth, virtue, love, genius, or joy,
 That maddening wine of life, whose dregs they drain
 To deep intoxication; and uplift,
 Like Mænads who cry loud, Evoe! Evoe!
 The voice which is contagion to the world. 10

Asia. Fit throne for such a Power! Magnificent!
 How glorious art thou, Earth! And if thou be
 The shadow of some spirit lovelier still,
 Though evil stain its work, and it should be
 Like its creation, weak yet beautiful, 15
 I could fall down and worship that and thee.
 Even now my heart adoreth: Wonderful!
 Look, sister, ere the vapour dim thy brain:
 Beneath is a wide plain of billowy mist,
 As a lake, paving in the morning sky, 20
 With azure waves which burst in silver light,
 Some Indian vale. Behold it, rolling on
 Under the curdling winds, and islanding
 The peak whereon we stand, midway, around,
 Encinctured by the dark and blooming forests, 25
 Dim twilight-lawns, and stream-illumèd caves,
 And wind-enchanted shapes of wandering mist;
 And far on high the keen sky-cleaving mountains
 From icy spires of sun-like radiance fling
 The dawn, as lifted Ocean's dazzling spray, 30
 From some Atlantic islet scattered up,
 Spangles the wind with lamp-like water-drops.
 The vale is girdled with their walls, a howl
 Of cataracts from their thaw-cloven ravines,
 Satiates the listening wind, continuous, vast, 35
 Awful as silence. Hark! the rushing snow!
 The sun-awakened avalanche! whose mass,
 Thrice sifted by the storm, had gathered there
 Flake after flake, in heaven-defying minds
 As thought by thought is piled, till some great truth 40
 Is loosened, and the nations echo round,
 Shaken to their roots, as do the mountains now.

Panthea. Look how the gusty sea of mist is breaking
 In crimson foam, even at our feet! it rises
 As Ocean at the enchantment of the moon 45
 Round foodless men wrecked on some oozy isle.

26 illumed B; illumined 1820.

Asia. The fragments of the cloud are scattered up ;
The wind that lifts them disentwines my hair ;
Its billows now sweep o'er mine eyes ; my brain
Grows dizzy ; see'st thou shapes within the mist ?

Panthea. A countenance with beckoning smiles: there burns
An azure fire within its golden locks!
Another and another: hark! they speak!

Song of Spirits.

To the deep, to the deep,

Down, down!

Through the shade of sleep,

Through the cloudy strife

Of Death and of Life:

Through the veil and the bar

Of things which seem and are

Even to the steps of the remotest throne,

Down, down!

While the sound whirls around,

Down, down!

As the fawn draws the hound,

As the lightning the vapour,

As a weak moth the taper:

Death, despair; love, sorrow:

Time both; to-day, to-morrow:

As steel obeys the spirit of the stone.

Down, down!

Through the gray, void abysm,

Down, down!

Where the air is no prism,

And the moon and stars are not,

And the cavern-crags wear not

The radiance of Heaven,

Nor the gloom to Earth given,

Where there is One pervading, One alone,

Down, down!

In the depth of the deep,

Down, down!

Like veiled lightning asleep,

Like the spark nursed in embers,

The last look Love remembers,

Like a diamond, which shines

On the dark wealth of mines,
A spell is treasured but for thee alone.

Down, down!

Demogorgon. He reigns.

Asia. I feel, I know it: who?

Demogorgon. He reigns.

Asia. Who reigns? There was the Heaven and Earth at first,
And Light and Love; then Saturn, from whose throne
Time fell, an envious shadow: such the state
Of the earth's primal spirits beneath his sway, 35
As the calm joy of flowers and living leaves
Before the wind or sun has withered them
And semivital worms; but he refused
The birthright of their being, knowledge, power,
The skill which wields the elements, the thought 40
Which pierces this dim universe like light,
Self-empire, and the majesty of love;
For thirst of which they fainted. Then Prometheus
Gave wisdom, which is strength, to Jupiter,
And with this law alone, 'Let man be free,' 45
Clothed him with the dominion of wide Heaven.
To know nor faith, nor love, nor law; to be
Omnipotent but friendless is to reign;
And Jove now reigned; for on the race of man
First famine, and then toil, and then disease, 50
Strife, wounds, and ghastly death unseen before,
Fell; and the unseasonable seasons drove
With alternating shafts of frost and fire,
Their shelterless, pale tribes to mountain caves:
And in their desert hearts fierce wants he sent, 55
And mad disquietudes, and shadows idle
Of unreal good, which levied mutual war,
So ruining the lair wherein they raged.
Prometheus saw, and waked the legioned hopes
Which sleep within folded Elysian flowers, 60
Nepenthe, Moly, Amaranth, fadeless blooms,
That they might hide with thin and rainbow wings
The shape of Death; and Love he sent to bind
The disunited tendrils of that vine
Which bears the wine of life, the human heart; 65
And he tamed fire which, like some beast of prey,
Most terrible, but lovely, played beneath
The frown of man; and tortured to his will
Iron and gold, the slaves and signs of power,
And gems and poisons, and all subtlest forms 70
Hidden beneath the mountains and the waves.
He gave man speech, and speech created thought,
Which is the measure of the universe;
And Science struck the thrones of earth and heaven,
Which shook, but fell not; and the harmonious mind 75
Poured itself forth in all-prophetic song;
And music lifted up the listening spirit
Until it walked, exempt from mortal care,

Godlike, o'er the clear billows of sweet sound ;
 And human hands first mimicked and then mocked, 80
 With moulded limbs more lovely than its own,
 The human form, till marble grew divine ;
 And mothers, gazing, drank the love men see
 Reflected in their race, behold, and perish.
 He told the hidden power of herbs and springs, 85
 And Disease drank and slept. Death grew like sleep.
 He taught the implicated orbits woven
 Of the wide-wandering stars ; and how the sun
 Changes his lair, and by what secret spell
 The pale moon is transformed, when her broad eye 90
 Gazes not on the interlunar sea :
 He taught to rule, as life directs the limbs,
 The tempest-wingèd chariots of the Ocean,
 And the Celt knew the Indian. Cities then
 Were built, and through their snow-like columns flowed 95
 The warm winds, and the azure aether shone,
 And the blue sea and shadowy hills were seen.
 Such, the alleviations of his state,
 Prometheus gave to man, for which he hangs
 Withering in destined pain : but who rains down 100
 Evil, the immedicable plague, which, while
 Man looks on his creation like a God
 And sees that it is glorious, drives him on,
 The wreck of his own will, the scorn of earth,
 The outcast, the abandoned, the alone ? 105
 Not Jove : while yet his frown shook Heaven, ay, when
 His adversary from adamant chains
 Cursed him, he trembled like a slave. Declare
 Who is his master ? Is he too a slave ?
Demogorgon. All spirits are enslaved which serve things evil : 110
 Thou knowest if Jupiter be such or no.
Asia. Whom calledst thou God ?
Demogorgon. I spoke but as ye speak,
 For Jove is the supreme of living things.
Asia. Who is the master of the slave ?
Demogorgon. If the abysm 115
 Could vomit forth its secrets. . . . But a voice
 Is wanting, the deep truth is imageless ;
 For what would it avail to bid thee gaze
 On the revolving world ? What to bid speak
 Fate, Time, Occasion, Chance, and Change ? To these
 All things are subject but eternal Love. 120
Asia. So much I asked before, and my heart gave
 The response thou hast given ; and of such truths
 Each to itself must be the oracle.
 One more demand ; and do thou answer me
 As mine own soul would answer, did it know 125

That which I ask. Prometheus shall arise
Henceforth the sun of this rejoicing world:
When shall the destined hour arrive?

Demogorgon.

Behold!

Asia. The rocks are cloven, and through the purple night
I see cars drawn by rainbow-wingèd steeds 130
Which trample the dim winds: in each there stands
A wild-eyed charioteer urging their flight.
Some look behind, as fiends pursued them there,
And yet I see no shapes but the keen stars:
Others, with burning eyes, lean forth, and drink 135
With eager lips the wind of their own speed,
As if the thing they loved fled on before,
And now, even now, they clasped it. Their bright locks
Stream like a comet's flashing hair: they all
Sweep onward.

Demogorgon. These are the immortal Hours, 140
Of whom thou didst demand. One waits for thee.

Asia. A spirit with a dreadful countenance
Checks its dark chariot by the craggy gulf.
Unlike thy brethren, ghastly charioteer,
Who art thou? Whither wouldst thou bear me? Speak! 145

Spirit. I am the shadow of a destiny
More dread than is my aspect: ere yon planet
Has set, the darkness which ascends with me
Shall wrap in lasting night heaven's kingless throne.

Asia. What meanest thou?

Panthea. That terrible shadow floats 150
Up from its throne, as may the lurid smoke
Of earthquake-ruined cities o'er the sea.
Lo! it ascends the car; the coursers fly
Terrified: watch its path among the stars
Blackening the night!

Asia. Thus I am answered: strange! 155

Panthea. See, near the verge, another chariot stays;
An ivory shell inlaid with crimson fire,
Which comes and goes within its sculptured rim
Of delicate strange tracery; the young spirit
That guides it has the dove-like eyes of hope; 160
How its soft smiles attract the soul! as light
Lures wingèd insects through the lampless air.

Spirit.

My coursers are fed with the lightning,
They drink of the whirlwind's stream,
And when the red morning is bright'ning 165
They bathe in the fresh sunbeam;
They have strength for their swiftness I deem,
Then ascend with me, daughter of Ocean.

I desire: and their speed makes night kindle;
 I fear: they outstrip the Typhoon;
 Ere the cloud piled on Atlas can dwindle
 We encircle the earth and the moon:
 We shall rest from long labours at noon:
 Then ascend with me, daughter of Ocean.

170

SCENE V.—*The Car pauses within a Cloud on the top of a snowy Mountain. ASIA, PANTHEA, and the SPIRIT OF THE HOUR.*

Spirit.

On the brink of the night and the morning
 My coursers are wont to respire;
 But the Earth has just whispered a warning
 That their flight must be swifter than fire:
 They shall drink the hot speed of desire!

5

Asia. Thou breathest on their nostrils, but my breath
 Would give them swifter speed.

Spirit.

Alas! it could not.

Panthea. Oh Spirit! pause, and tell whence is the light
 Which fills this cloud? the sun is yet unrisen.

Spirit. The sun will rise not until noon. Apollo
 Is held in heaven by wonder; and the light
 Which fills this vapour, as the æreal hue
 Of fountain-gazing roses fills the water,
 Flows from thy mighty sister.

10

Panthea.

Yes, I feel—

Asia. What is it with thee, sister? Thou art pale.

15

Panthea. How thou art changed! I dare not look on thee;
 I feel but see thee not. I scarce endure
 The radiance of thy beauty. Some good change
 Is working in the elements, which suffer
 Thy presence thus unveiled. The Nereids tell
 That on the day when the clear hyaline
 Was cloven at thine uprise, and thou didst stand
 Within a veinèd shell, which floated on
 Over the calm floor of the crystal sea,
 Among the Ægean isles, and by the shores
 Which bear thy name; love, like the atmosphere
 Of the sun's fire filling the living world,
 Burst from thee, and illumined earth and heaven
 And the deep ocean and the sunless caves
 And all that dwells within them; till grief cast
 Eclipse upon the soul from which it came:
 Such art thou now; nor is it I alone,
 Thy sister, thy companion, thine own chosen one,
 But the whole world which seeks thy sympathy.
 Hearest thou not sounds i' the air which speak the love
 Of all articulate beings? Feelest thou not
 The inanimate winds enamoured of thee? List!

20

25

30

35

[*Music.*

9 this B; the 1820.

22 thine B; thy 1820.

Asia. Thy words are sweeter than aught else but his
 Whose echoes they are: yet all love is sweet,
 Given or returned. Common as light is love, 40
 And its familiar voice wearies not ever.
 Like the wide heaven, the all-sustaining air,
 It makes the reptile equal to the God:
 They who inspire it most are fortunate,
 As I am now; but those who feel it most 45
 Are happier still, after long sufferings,
 As I shall soon become.

Panthea. List! Spirits speak.

Voice in the Air, singing.

Life of Life! thy lips enkindle
 With their love the breath between them;
 And thy smiles before they dwindle 50
 Make the cold air fire; then screen them
 In those looks, where whoso gazes
 Faints, entangled in their mazes.
 Child of Light! thy limbs are burning
 Through the vest which seems to hide them; 55
 As the radiant lines of morning
 Through the clouds ere they divide them;
 And this atmosphere divinest
 Shrouds thee wheresoe'er thou shinest.
 Fair are others; none beholds thee, 60
 But thy voice sounds low and tender
 Like the fairest, for it folds thee
 From the sight, that liquid splendour,
 And all feel, yet see thee never,
 As I feel now, lost for ever! 65
 Lamp of Earth! where'er thou movest
 Its dim shapes are clad with brightness,
 And the souls of whom thou lovest
 Walk upon the winds with lightness,
 Till they fail, as I am failing, 70
 Dizzy, lost, yet unbewailing!

Asia.

My soul is an enchanted boat,
 Which, like a sleeping swan, doth float
 Upon the silver waves of thy sweet singing;
 And thine doth like an angel sit 75
 Beside a helm conducting it,
 Whilst all the winds with melody are ringing.
 It seems to float ever, for ever,
 Upon that many-winding river,
 Between mountains, woods, abysses, 80
 A paradise of wildernesses!

Till, like one in slumber bound,
 Borne to the ocean, I float down, around,
 Into a sea profound, of ever-spreading sound:

Meanwhile thy spirit lifts its pinions 85
 In music's most serene dominions;
 Catching the winds that fan that happy heaven.
 And we sail on, away, afar,
 Without a course, without a star,
 But, by the instinct of sweet music driven; 90
 Till through Elysian garden islets
 By thee, most beautiful of pilots,
 Where never mortal pinnacle glided,
 The boat of my desire is guided:
 Realms where the air we breathe is love, 95
 Which in the winds and on the waves doth move,
 Harmonizing this earth with what we feel above.

We have passed Age's icy caves,
 And Manhood's dark and tossing waves,
 And Youth's smooth ocean, smiling to betray: 100
 Beyond the glassy gulfs we flee
 Of shadow-peopled Infancy,
 Through Death and Birth, to a diviner day;
 A paradise of vaulted bowers,
 Lit by downward-gazing flowers, 105
 And watery paths that wind between
 Wildernesses calm and green,
 Peopled by shapes too bright to see,
 And rest, having beheld; somewhat like thee;
 Which walk upon the sea, and chant melodiously! 110

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III

SCENE I.—*Heaven. JUPITER on his Throne; THETIS and the other Deities assembled.*

Jupiter. Ye congregated powers of heaven, who share
 The glory and the strength of him ye serve,
 Rejoice! henceforth I am omnipotent.
 All else had been subdued to me; alone
 The soul of man, like unextinguished fire, 5
 Yet burns towards heaven with fierce reproach, and doubt,
 And lamentation, and reluctant prayer,
 Hurling up insurrection, which might make
 Our antique empire insecure, though built
 On eldest faith, and hell's coeval, fear; 10
 And though my curses through the pendulous air,

96 winds and on *B*; winds on 1820.
 extinguished 1820.

5 like unextinguished *B*, ed. 1839; like an un-

Like snow on herbless peaks, fall flake by flake,
 And cling to it; though under my wrath's night
 It climbs the crags of life, step after step,
 Which wound it, as ice wounds unsandalled feet, 15
 It yet remains supreme o'er misery,
 Aspiring, unrepressed, yet soon to fall:
 Even now have I begotten a strange wonder,
 That fatal child, the terror of the earth,
 Who waits but till the destined hour arrive, 20
 Bearing from Demogorgon's vacant throne
 The dreadful might of ever-living limbs
 Which clothed that awful spirit unbeheld,
 To redescend, and trample out the spark.
 Pour forth heaven's wine, Idæan Ganymede, 25
 And let it fill the Dædal cups like fire,
 And from the flower-inwoven soil divine
 Ye all-triumphant harmonies arise,
 As dew from earth under the twilight stars:
 Drink! be the nectar circling through your veins 30
 The soul of joy, ye ever-living Gods,
 Till exultation burst in one wide voice
 Like music from Elysian winds.

And thou

Ascend beside me, veiled in the light
 Of the desire which makes thee one with me, 35
 Thetis, bright image of eternity!
 When thou didst cry, 'Insufferable might!
 God! Spare me! I sustain not the quick flames,
 The penetrating presence; all my being,
 Like him whom the Numidian seps did thaw 40
 Into a dew with poison, is dissolved,
 Sinking through its foundations:' even then
 Two mighty spirits, mingling, made a third
 Mightier than either, which, unbodied now,
 Between us floats, felt, although unbeheld, 45
 Waiting the incarnation, which ascends,
 (Hear ye the thunder of the fiery wheels
 Griding the winds?) from Demogorgon's throne.
 Victory! victory! Feel'st thou not, O world,
 The earthquake of his chariot thundering up 50
 Olympus?

*[The Car of the HOUR arrives. DEMOGORGON descends,
 and moves towards the Throne of JUPITER.]*

Awful shape, what art thou? Speak!

Demogorgon. Eternity. Demand no direr name.
 Descend, and follow me down the abyss.
 I am thy child, as thou wert Saturn's child;
 Mightier than thee: and we must dwell together 55
 Henceforth in darkness. Lift thy lightnings not.

The tyranny of heaven none may retain,
 Or reassume, or hold, succeeding thee:
 Yet if thou wilt, as 'tis the destiny
 Of trodden worms to writhe till they are dead, 60
 Put forth thy might.

Jupiter. Detested prodigy!
 Even thus beneath the deep Titanian prisons
 I trample thee! thou lingerest?

Mercy! mercy!
 No pity, no release, no respite! Oh,
 That thou wouldst make mine enemy my judge, 65
 Even where he hangs, seared by my long revenge,
 On Caucasus! he would not doom me thus.
 Gentle, and just, and dreadless, is he not
 The monarch of the world? What then art thou?
 No refuge! no appeal!

Sink with me then, 70
 We two will sink on the wide waves of ruin,
 Even as a vulture and a snake outspent
 Drop, twisted in inextricable fight,
 Into a shoreless sea. Let hell unlock
 Its mounded oceans of tempestuous fire, 75
 And whelm on them into the bottomless void
 This desolated world, and thee, and me,
 The conqueror and the conquered, and the wreck
 Of that for which they combated.

Ai! Ai!
 The elements obey me not. I sink 80
 Dizzily down, ever, for ever, down.
 And, like a cloud, mine enemy above
 Darkens my fall with victory! Ai, Ai!

SCENE II.—*The Mouth of a great River in the Island Atlantis. OCEAN is discovered reclining near the Shore; APOLLO stands beside him.*

Ocean. He fell, thou sayest, beneath his conqueror's frown?

Apollo. Ay, when the strife was ended which made dim
 The orb I rule, and shook the solid stars,
 The terrors of his eye illumined heaven
 With sanguine light, through the thick ragged skirts 5
 Of the victorious darkness, as he fell:
 Like the last glare of day's red agony,
 Which, from a rent among the fiery clouds,
 Burns far along the tempest-wrinkled deep.

Ocean. He sunk to the abyss? To the dark void? 10

Apollo. An eagle so caught in some bursting cloud
 On Caucasus, his thunder-baffled wings
 Entangled in the whirlwind, and his eyes
 Which gazed on the undazzling sun, now blinded

By the white lightning, while the ponderous hail
Beats on his struggling form, which sinks at length
Prone, and the æreal ice clings over it. 15

Ocean. Henceforth the fields of heaven-reflecting sea
Which are my realm, will heave, unstained with blood,
Beneath the uplifting winds, like plains of corn 20
Swayed by the summer air; my streams will flow
Round many-peopled continents, and round
Fortunate isles; and from their glassy thrones
Blue Proteus and his humid nymphs shall mark
The shadow of fair ships, as mortals see 25
The floating bark of the light-laden moon
With that white star, its sightless pilot's crest,
Borne down the rapid sunset's ebbing sea;
Tracking their path no more by blood and groans,
And desolation, and the mingled voice 30
Of slavery and command; but by the light
Of wave-reflected flowers, and floating odours,
And music soft, and mild, free, gentle voices,
And sweetest music, such as spirits love.

Apollo. And I shall gaze not on the deeds which make 35
My mind obscure with sorrow, as eclipse
Darkens the sphere I guide; but list, I hear
The small, clear, silver lute of the young Spirit
That sits i' the morning star.

Ocean. Thou must away;
Thy steeds will pause at even, till when farewell: 40
The loud deep calls me home even now to feed it
With azure calm out of the emerald urns
Which stand for ever full beside my throne.
Behold the Nereids under the green sea,
Their wavering limbs borne on the wind-like stream, 45
Their white arms lifted o'er their streaming hair
With garlands pied and starry sea-flower crowns,
Hastening to grace their mighty sister's joy.

[*A sound of waves is heard.*]

It is the unpastured sea hungering for calm.

Peace, monster; I come now. Farewell.

Apollo.

Farewell.

50

SCENE III.—*Caucasus.* PROMETHEUS, HERCULES, IONE, *the* EARTH,
SPIRITS, ASIA, and PANTHEA, borne in the Car with the SPIRIT OF THE
HOUR. HERCULES unbinds PROMETHEUS, who descends.

Hercules. Most glorious among Spirits, thus doth strength
To wisdom, courage, and long-suffering love,
And thee, who art the form they animate,
Minister like a slave.

Prometheus.

Thy gentle words

22 many-peopled *B*; many peopled 1820.
39 i' the *B*, *ed.* 1839; on the 1820.

26 light-laden *B*; light laden 1820.

Are sweeter even than freedom long desired 5
And long delayed.

Asia, thou light of life,
Shadow of beauty unbeheld: and ye,
Fair sister nymphs, who made long years of pain
Sweet to remember, through your love and care:
Henceforth we will not part. There is a cave, 10
All overgrown with trailing odorous plants,
Which curtain out the day with leaves and flowers,
And paved with veined emerald, and a fountain
Leaps in the midst with an awakening sound.
From its curved roof the mountain's frozen tears 15
Like snow, or silver, or long diamond spires,
Hang downward, raining forth a doubtful light:
And there is heard the ever-moving air,
Whispering without from tree to tree, and birds,
And bees; and all around are mossy seats, 20
And the rough walls are clothed with long soft grass;
A simple dwelling, which shall be our own;
Where we will sit and talk of time and change,
As the world ebbs and flows, ourselves unchanged.
What can hide man from mutability? 25
And if ye sigh, then I will smile; and thou,
Ione, shalt chant fragments of sea-music,
Until I weep, when ye shall smile away
The tears she brought, which yet were sweet to shed.
We will entangle buds and flowers and beams 30
Which twinkle on the fountain's brim, and make
Strange combinations out of common things,
Like human babes in their brief innocence;
And we will search, with looks and words of love,
For hidden thoughts, each lovelier than the last, 35
Our unexhausted spirits; and like lutes
Touched by the skill of the enamoured wind,
Weave harmonies divine, yet ever new,
From difference sweet where discord cannot be;
And hither come, sped on the charmed winds, 40
Which meet from all the points of heaven, as bees
From every flower æreal Enna feeds,
At their known island-homes in Himera,
The echoes of the human world, which tell
Of the low voice of love, almost unheard, 45
And dove-eyed pity's murmured pain, and music,
Itself the echo of the heart, and all
That tempers or improves man's life, now free;
And lovely apparitions,—dim at first,
Then radiant, as the mind, arising bright 50
From the embrace of beauty (whence the forms
Of which these are the phantoms) casts on them
The gathered rays which are reality—

Shall visit us, the progeny immortal
 Of Painting, Sculpture, and rapt Poesy,
 And arts, though unimagined, yet to be. 55
 The wandering voices and the shadows these
 Of all that man becomes, the mediators
 Of that best worship love, by him and us
 Given and returned; swift shapes and sounds, which grow 60
 More fair and soft as man grows wise and kind,
 And, veil by veil, evil and error fall:
 Such virtue has the cave and place around.

[*Turning to the* SPIRIT OF THE HOUR.

For thee, fair Spirit, one toil remains. Ione,
 Give her that curvèd shell, which Proteus old 65
 Made Asia's nuptial boon, breathing within it
 A voice to be accomplished, and which thou
 Didst hide in grass under the hollow rock.

Ione. Thou most desired Hour, more loved and lovely
 Than all thy sisters, this is the mystic shell;
 See the pale azure fading into silver 70
 Lining it with a soft yet glowing light:
 Looks it not like lulled music sleeping there?

Spirit. It seems in truth the fairest shell of Ocean:
 Its sound must be at once both sweet and strange. 75

Prometheus. Go, borne over the cities of mankind
 On whirlwind-footed coursers: once again
 Outspeed the sun around the orbèd world;
 And as thy chariot cleaves the kindling air,
 Thou breathe into the many-folded shell, 80
 Loosening its mighty music; it shall be
 As thunder mingled with clear echoes: then
 Return; and thou shalt dwell beside our cave.
 And thou, O, Mother Earth!—

The Earth. I hear, I feel;
 Thy lips are on me, and their touch runs down 85
 Even to the adamantine central gloom
 Along these marble nerves; 'tis life, 'tis joy,
 And through my withered, old, and icy frame
 The warmth of an immortal youth shoots down
 Circling. Henceforth the many children fair 90
 Folded in my sustaining arms; all plants,
 And creeping forms, and insects rainbow-winged,
 And birds, and beasts, and fish, and human shapes,
 Which drew disease and pain from my wan bosom,
 Draining the poison of despair, shall take 95
 And interchange sweet nutriment; to me
 Shall they become like sister-antelopes
 By one fair dam, snow-white and swift as wind,
 Nursed among lilies near a brimming stream.
 The dew-mists of my sunless sleep shall float 100

85 their *B*; thy 1820.

Under the stars like balm: night-folded flowers
 Shall suck unwithering hues in their repose:
 And men and beasts in happy dreams shall gather
 Strength for the coming day, and all its joy:
 And death shall be the last embrace of her 105
 Who takes the life she gave, even as a mother
 Folding her child, says, 'Leave me not again.'

Asia. Oh, mother! wherefore speak the name of death?
 Cease they to love, and move, and breathe, and speak,
 Who die?

The Earth. It would avail not to reply: 110
 Thou art immortal, and this tongue is known
 But to the uncommunicating dead.
 Death is the veil which those who live call life:
 They sleep, and it is lifted: and meanwhile
 In mild variety the seasons mild 115
 With rainbow-skirted showers, and odorous winds,
 And long blue meteors cleansing the dull night,
 And the life-kindling shafts of the keen sun's
 All-piercing bow, and the dew-mingled rain
 Of the calm moonbeams, a soft influence mild, 120
 Shall clothe the forests and the fields, ay, even
 The crag-built deserts of the barren deep,
 With ever-living leaves, and fruits, and flowers.
 And thou! There is a cavern where my spirit
 Was panted forth in anguish whilst thy pain 125
 Made my heart mad, and those who did inhale it
 Became mad too, and built a temple there,
 And spoke, and were oracular, and lured
 The erring nations round to mutual war,
 And faithless faith, such as Jove kept with thee; 130
 Which breath now rises, as amongst tall weeds
 A violet's exhalation, and it fills
 With a serener light and crimson air
 Intense, yet soft, the rocks and woods around;
 It feeds the quick growth of the serpent vine, 135
 And the dark linkèd ivy tangling wild,
 And budding, blown, or odour-faded blooms
 Which star the winds with points of coloured light,
 As they rain through them, and bright golden globes
 Of fruit, suspended in their own green heaven, 140
 And through their veinèd leaves and amber stems
 The flowers whose purple and translucid bowls
 Stand ever mantling with aëreal dew,
 The drink of spirits: and it circles round,
 Like the soft waving wings of noonday dreams, 145
 Inspiring calm and happy thoughts, like mine,
 Now thou art thus restored. This cave is thine.

Arise! Appear! [*A SPIRIT rises in the likeness of a winged child.*

102 unwithering *B*, ed. 1839; unwitting 1820.

This is my torch-bearer ;
 Who let his lamp out in old time with gazing
 On eyes from which he kindled it anew 150
 With love, which is as fire, sweet daughter mine,
 For such is that within thine own. Run, wayward,
 And guide this company beyond the peak
 Of Bacchic Nysa, Mænad-haunted mountain,
 And beyond Indus and its tribute rivers, 155
 Trampling the torrent streams and glassy lakes
 With feet unwet, unwearied, undelaying,
 And up the green ravine, across the vale,
 Beside the windless and crystalline pool,
 Where ever lies, on unerasing waves, 160
 The image of a temple, built above,
 Distinct with column, arch, and architrave,
 And palm-like capital, and over-wrought,
 And populous with most living imagery,
 Praxitelean shapes, whose marble smiles 165
 Fill the hushed air with everlasting love.
 It is deserted now, but once it bore
 Thy name, Prometheus ; there the emulous youths
 Bore to thy honour through the divine gloom
 The lamp which was thine emblem ; even as those 170
 Who bear the untransmitted torch of hope
 Into the grave, across the night of life,
 As thou hast borne it most triumphantly
 To this far goal of Time. Depart, farewell.
 Beside that temple is the destined cave. 175

SCENE IV.—*A Forest. In the Background a Cave.* PROMETHEUS, ASIA,
 PANTHEA, IONE, *and the SPIRIT OF THE EARTH.*

Ione. Sister, it is not earthly: how it glides
 Under the leaves! how on its head there burns
 A light, like a green star, whose emerald beams
 Are twined with its fair hair! how, as it moves,
 The splendour drops in flakes upon the grass! 5
 Knowest thou it?

Panthea. It is the delicate spirit
 That guides the earth through heaven. From afar
 The populous constellations call that light
 The loveliest of the planets ; and sometimes
 It floats along the spray of the salt sea, 10
 Or makes its chariot of a foggy cloud,
 Or walks through fields or cities while men sleep,
 Or o'er the mountain tops, or down the rivers,
 Or through the green waste wilderness, as now,
 Wondering at all it sees. Before Jove reigned 15
 It loved our sister Asia, and it came

164 with most *B*; most with 1820.

Each leisure hour to drink the liquid light
 Out of her eyes, for which it said it thirsted
 As one bit by a dipsas, and with her
 It made its childish confidence, and told her
 All it had known or seen, for it saw much,
 Yet idly reasoned what it saw; and called her—
 For whence it sprung it knew not, nor do I—
 Mother, dear mother.

20

The Spirit of the Earth (running to ASIA). Mother, dearest mother;
 May I then talk with thee as I was wont?
 25

May I then hide my eyes in thy soft arms,
 After thy looks have made them tired of joy?
 May I then play beside thee the long noons,
 When work is none in the bright silent air?

Asia. I love thee, gentlest being, and henceforth
 Can cherish thee unenvied: speak, I pray:
 Thy simple talk once solaced, now delights.

30

Spirit of the Earth. Mother, I am grown wiser, though a child
 Cannot be wise like thee, within this day;

And happier too; happier and wiser both.
 Thou knowest that toads, and snakes, and loathly worms,
 And venomous and malicious beasts, and boughs
 That bore ill berries in the woods, were ever
 An hindrance to my walks o'er the green world:

35

And that, among the haunts of humankind,
 Hard-featured men, or with proud, angry looks,
 Or cold, staid gait, or false and hollow smiles,
 Or the dull sneer of self-loved ignorance,

40

Or other such foul masks, with which ill thoughts
 Hide that fair being whom we spirits call man;
 And women too, ugliest of all things evil,

45

(Though fair, even in a world where thou art fair,
 When good and kind, free and sincere like thee),
 When false or frowning made me sick at heart
 To pass them, though they slept, and I unseen.

50

Well, my path lately lay through a great city
 Into the woody hills surrounding it:

A sentinel was sleeping at the gate:

When there was heard a sound, so loud, it shook
 The towers amid the moonlight, yet more sweet
 Than any voice but thine, sweetest of all;

55

A long, long sound, as it would never end:

And all the inhabitants leaped suddenly
 Out of their rest, and gathered in the streets,
 Looking in wonder up to Heaven, while yet

60

The music pealed along. I hid myself
 Within a fountain in the public square,
 Where I lay like the reflex of the moon
 Seen in a wave under green leaves; and soon
 Those ugly human shapes and visages

65

Of which I spoke as having wrought me pain,
 Passed floating through the air, and fading still
 Into the winds that scattered them; and those
 From whom they passed seemed mild and lovely forms
 After some foul disguise had fallen, and all 70
 Were somewhat changed, and after brief surprise
 And greetings of delighted wonder, all
 Went to their sleep again: and when the dawn
 Came, wouldst thou think that toads, and snakes, and efts,
 Could e'er be beautiful? yet so they were, 75
 And that with little change of shape or hue:
 All things had put their evil nature off:
 I cannot tell my joy, when o'er a lake
 Upon a drooping bough with nightshade twined,
 I saw two azure halcyons clinging downward 80
 And thinning one bright bunch of amber berries,
 With quick long beaks, and in the deep there lay
 Those lovely forms imaged as in a sky;
 So, with my thoughts full of these happy changes,
 We meet again, the happiest change of all. 85

Asia. And never will we part, till thy chaste sister
 Who guides the frozen and inconstant moon
 Will look on thy more warm and equal light
 Till her heart thaw like flakes of April snow
 And love thee.

Spirit of the Earth. What; as Asia loves Prometheus? 90

Asia. Peace, wanton, thou art yet not old enough.
 Think ye by gazing on each other's eyes
 To multiply your lovely selves, and fill
 With spherèd fires the interlunar air?

Spirit of the Earth. Nay, mother, while my sister trims her lamp 95
 'Tis hard I should go darkling.

Asia. Listen; look!

[*The SPIRIT OF THE HOUR enters.*

Prometheus. We feel what thou hast heard and seen: yet speak.

Spirit of the Hour. Soon as the sound had ceased whose thunder filled
 The abysses of the sky and the wide earth, 100
 There was a change: the impalpable thin air
 And the all-circling sunlight were transformed,
 As if the sense of love dissolved in them
 Had folded itself round the spherèd world.
 My vision then grew clear, and I could see
 Into the mysteries of the universe: 105
 Dizzy as with delight I floated down,
 Winnowing the lightsome air with languid plumes,
 My coursers sought their birthplace in the sun,
 Where they henceforth will live exempt from toil,
 Pasturing flowers of vegetable fire; 110
 And where my moonlike car will stand within
 A temple, gazed upon by Phidian forms

Of thee, and Asia, and the Earth, and me,
 And you fair nymphs looking the love we feel,—
 In memory of the tidings it has borne,— 115
 Beneath a dome fretted with graven flowers,
 Poised on twelve columns of resplendent stone,
 And open to the bright and liquid sky.
 Yoked to it by an amphisbaenic snake
 The likeness of those wingèd steeds will mock 120
 The flight from which they find repose. Alas,
 Whither has wandered now my partial tongue
 When all remains untold which ye would hear?
 As I have said, I floated to the earth:
 It was, as it is still, the pain of bliss 125
 To move, to breathe, to be; I wandering went
 Among the haunts and dwellings of mankind,
 And first was disappointed not to see
 Such mighty change as I had felt within
 Expressed in outward things; but soon I looked, 130
 And behold, thrones were kingless, and men walked
 One with the other even as spirits do,
 None fawned, none trampled; hate, disdain, or fear,
 Self-love or self-contempt, on human brows
 No more inscribed, as o'er the gate of hell, 135
 'All hope abandon ye who enter here;'
 None frowned, none trembled, none with eager fear
 Gazed on another's eye of cold command,
 Until the subject of a tyrant's will
 Became, worse fate, the abject of his own, 140
 Which spurred him, like an outspent horse, to death.
 None wrought his lips in truth-entangling lines
 Which smiled the lie his tongue disdained to speak;
 None, with firm sneer, trod out in his own heart
 The sparks of love and hope till there remained 145
 Those bitter ashes, a soul self-consumed,
 And the wretch crept a vampire among men,
 Infecting all with his own hideous ill;
 None talked that common, false, cold, hollow talk
 Which makes the heart deny the *yes* it breathes, 150
 Yet question that unmeant hypocrisy
 With such a self-mistrust as has no name.
 And women, too, frank, beautiful, and kind
 As the free heaven which rains fresh light and dew
 On the wide earth, past; gentle radiant forms, 155
 From custom's evil taint exempt and pure;
 Speaking the wisdom once they could not think,
 Looking emotions once they feared to feel,
 And changed to all which once they dared not be,
 Yet being now, made earth like heaven; nor pride,
 Nor jealousy, nor envy, nor ill shame, 160

The bitterest of those drops of treasured gall,
Spoilt the sweet taste of the nepenthe, love.

Thrones, altars, judgement-seats, and prisons; wherein,
And beside which, by wretched men were borne 165
Sceptres, tiaras, swords, and chains, and tomes
Of reasoned wrong, glozed on by ignorance,
Were like those monstrous and barbaric shapes,
The ghosts of a no-more-remembered fame,
Which, from their unworn obelisks, look forth 170
In triumph o'er the palaces and tombs
Of those who were their conquerors: mouldering round,
These imaged to the pride of kings and priests
A dark yet mighty faith, a power as wide
As is the world it wasted, and are now 175
But an astonishment; even so the tools
And emblems of its last captivity,
Amid the dwellings of the peopled earth,
Stand, not o'erthrown, but unregarded now.
And those foul shapes, abhorred by god and man,— 180
Which, under many a name and many a form
Strange, savage, ghastly, dark and execrable,
Were Jupiter, the tyrant of the world;
And which the nations, panic-stricken, served
With blood, and hearts broken by long hope, and love 185
Dragged to his altars soiled and garlandless,
And slain amid men's unreclaiming tears,
Flattering the thing they feared, which fear was hate,—
Frown, mouldering fast, o'er their abandoned shrines:
The painted veil, by those who were, called life, 190
Which mimicked, as with colours idly spread,
All men believed or hoped, is torn aside;
The loathsome mask has fallen, the man remains
Sceptreless, free, uncircumscribed, but man
Equal, unclassed, tribeless, and nationless, 195
Exempt from awe, worship, degree, the king
Over himself; just, gentle, wise: but man
Passionless?—no, yet free from guilt or pain,
Which were, for his will made or suffered them,
Nor yet exempt, though ruling them like slaves, 200
From chance, and death, and mutability,
The clogs of that which else might oversoar
The loftiest star of unascended heaven,
Pinnacled dim in the intense inane.

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

173 These *B*; Those 1820.

187 amid *B*; among 1820.

192 or *B*; and 1820.

ACT IV

SCENE.—*A Part of the Forest near the Cave of* PROMETHEUS. *PANTHEA and IONE are sleeping: they awaken gradually during the first Song.*

Voice of unseen Spirits.

The pale stars are gone!
 For the sun, their swift shepherd,
 To their folds them compelling,
 In the depths of the dawn,
 Hastes, in meteor-eclipsing array, and they flee 5
 Beyond his blue dwelling,
 As fawns flee the leopard.
 But where are ye?

A Train of dark Forms and Shadows passes by confusedly, singing.

Here, oh, here:
 We bear the bier 10
 Of the Father of many a cancelled year
 Spectres we
 Of the dead Hours be,
 We bear Time to his tomb in eternity.

Strew, oh, strew 15
 Hair, not yew!
 Wet the dusty pall with tears, not dew!
 Be the faded flowers
 Of Death's bare bowers
 Spread on the corpse of the King of Hours! 20

Haste, oh, haste!
 As shades are chased,
 Trembling, by day, from heaven's blue waste.
 We melt away,
 Like dissolving spray, 25
 From the children of a diviner day,
 With the lullaby
 Of winds that die
 On the bosom of their own harmony!

Ione.

What dark forms were they? 30

Panthea.

The past Hours weak and gray,
 With the spoil which their toil
 Raked together
 From the conquest but One could foil.

Ione.

Have they passed?

Panthea.

They have passed ;
They outspeeded the blast,
While 'tis said, they are fled: 35

Ione.

Whither, oh, whither?

Panthea.

To the dark, to the past, to the dead.

Voice of unseen Spirits.

Bright clouds float in heaven,
Dew-stars gleam on earth,
Waves assemble on ocean,
They are gathered and driven
By the storm of delight, by the panic of glee!
They shake with emotion,
They dance in their mirth. 40
But where are ye? 45

The pine boughs are singing
Old songs with new gladness,
The billows and fountains
Fresh music are flinging,
Like the notes of a spirit from land and from sea;
The storms mock the mountains
With the thunder of gladness.
But where are ye? 50
55

Ione. What charioteers are these?

Panthea. Where are their chariots?

Semichorus of Hours.

The voice of the Spirits of Air and of Earth
Have drawn back the figured curtain of sleep
Which covered our being and darkened our birth
In the deep.

A Voice.

In the deep?

Semichorus II.

Oh, below the deep. 60

Semichorus I.

An hundred ages we had been kept
Cradled in visions of hate and care,
And each one who waked as his brother slept,
Found the truth—

Semichorus II.

Worse than his visions were!

Semichorus I.

We have heard the lute of Hope in sleep ; 65
 We have known the voice of Love in dreams ;
 We have felt the wand of Power, and leap—

Semichorus II.

As the billows leap in the morning beams!

Chorus.

Weave the dance on the floor of the breeze,
 Pierce with song heaven's silent light, 70
 Enchant the day that too swiftly flees,
 To check its flight ere the cave of Night.

Once the hungry Hours were hounds
 Which chased the day like a bleeding deer,
 And it limped and stumbled with many wounds 75
 Through the nightly dells of the desert year.

But now, oh weave the mystic measure
 Of music, and dance, and shapes of light,
 Let the Hours, and the spirits of might and pleasure,
 Like the clouds and sunbeams, unite.

A Voice.

Unite! 80

Panthea. See, where the Spirits of the human mind
 Wrapped in sweet sounds, as in bright veils, approach.

Chorus of Spirits.

We join the throng
 Of the dance and the song,
 By the whirlwind of gladness borne along ; 85
 As the flying-fish leap
 From the Indian deep,
 And mix with the sea-birds, half asleep.

Chorus of Hours.

Whence come ye, so wild and so fleet,
 For sandals of lightning are on your feet, 90
 And your wings are soft and swift as thought,
 And your eyes are as love which is veiled not?

Chorus of Spirits.

We come from the mind
 Of human kind
 Which was late so dusk, and obscene, and blind, 95
 Now 'tis an ocean
 Of clear emotion,
 A heaven of serene and mighty motion.
 From that deep abyss
 Of wonder and bliss, 100
 Whose caverns are crystal palaces ;

From those skiey towers
 Where Thought's crowned powers
 Sit watching your dance, ye happy Hours!
 From the dim recesses 105
 Of woven caresses,
 Where lovers catch ye by your loose tresses
 From the azure isles,
 Where sweet Wisdom smiles,
 Delaying your ships with her siren wiles. 110
 From the temples high
 Of Man's ear and eye,
 Roofed over Sculpture and Poesy;
 From the murmurings
 Of the unsealed springs 115
 Where Science bedews her Dædal wings.
 Years after years,
 Through blood, and tears,
 And a thick hell of hatreds, and hopes, and fears;
 We waded and flew, 120
 And the islets were few
 Where the bud-blighted flowers of happiness grew.
 Our feet now, every palm,
 Are sandalled with calm,
 And the dew of our wings is a rain of balm; 125
 And, beyond our eyes,
 The human love lies
 Which makes all it gazes on Paradise.

Chorus of Spirits and Hours.

Then weave the web of the mystic measure;
 From the depths of the sky and the ends of the earth, 130
 Come, swift Spirits of might and of pleasure,
 Fill the dance and the music of mirth,
 As the waves of a thousand streams rush by
 To an ocean of splendour and harmony!

Chorus of Spirits.

Our spoil is won, 135
 Our task is done,
 We are free to dive, or soar, or run;
 Beyond and around,
 Or within the bound
 Which clips the world with darkness round. 140
 We'll pass the eyes
 Of the starry skies
 Into the hoar deep to colonize:
 Death, Chaos, and Night,
 From the sound of our flight, 145
 Shall flee, like mist from a tempest's might.

And Earth, Air, and Light,
 And the Spirit of Might,
 Which drives round the stars in their fiery flight;
 And Love, Thought, and Breath, 150
 The powers that quell Death,
 Wherever we soar shall assemble beneath.
 And our singing shall build
 In the void's loose field
 A world for the Spirit of Wisdom to wield; 155
 We will take our plan
 From the new world of man,
 And our work shall be called the Promethean.

Chorus of Hours.

Break the dance, and scatter the song;
 Let some depart, and some remain. 160

Semichorus I.

We, beyond heaven, are driven along:

Semichorus II.

Us the enchantments of earth retain:

Semichorus I.

Ceaseless, and rapid, and fierce, and free,
 With the Spirits which build a new earth and sea,
 And a heaven where yet heaven could never be. 165

Semichorus II.

Solemn, and slow, and serene, and bright,
 Leading the Day and outspeeding the Night,
 With the powers of a world of perfect light.

Semichorus I.

We whirl, singing loud, round the gathering sphere,
 Till the trees, and the beasts, and the clouds appear 170
 From its chaos made calm by love, not fear.

Semichorus II.

We encircle the ocean and mountains of earth,
 And the happy forms of its death and birth
 Change to the music of our sweet mirth.

Chorus of Hours and Spirits.

Break the dance, and scatter the song, 175
 Let some depart, and some remain,
 Wherever we fly we lead along
 In leashes, like starbeams, soft yet strong,
 The clouds that are heavy with love's sweet rain.

Panthea. Ha! they are gone!

Ione.

Yet feel you no delight 180

From the past sweetness?

Panthea.

As the bare green hill
 When some soft cloud vanishes into rain,

Laughs with a thousand drops of sunny water
To the unpavilioned sky!

Ione. Even whilst we speak
New notes arise. What is that awful sound?

185

Panthea. 'Tis the deep music of the rolling world
Kindling within the strings of the waved air
Æolian modulations.

Ione. Listen too,
How every pause is filled with under-notes,
Clear, silver, icy, keen, awakening tones,
Which pierce the sense, and live within the soul,
As the sharp stars pierce winter's crystal air
And gaze upon themselves within the sea.

190

Panthea. But see where through two openings in the forest
Which hanging branches overcanopy,
And where two runnels of a rivulet,
Between the close moss violet-inwoven,
Have made their path of melody, like sisters
Who part with sighs that they may meet in smiles,
Turning their dear disunion to an isle
Of lovely grief, a wood of sweet sad thoughts;
Two visions of strange radiance float upon
The ocean-like enchantment of strong sound,
Which flows intenser, keener, deeper yet
Under the ground and through the windless air.

195

200

205

Ione. I see a chariot like that thinnest boat,
In which the Mother of the Months is borne
By ebbing light into her western cave,
When she upsprings from interlunar dreams;
O'er which is curved an orblike canopy
Of gentle darkness, and the hills and woods,
Distinctly seen through that dusk aery veil,
Regard like shapes in an enchanter's glass;
Its wheels are solid clouds, azure and gold,
Such as the genii of the thunderstorm
Pile on the floor of the illumined sea

210

215

When the sun rushes under it; they roll
And move and grow as with an inward wind;
Within it sits a wingèd infant, white
Its countenance, like the whiteness of bright snow,
Its plumes are as feathers of sunny frost,
Its limbs gleam white, through the wind-flowing folds
Of its white robe, woof of ethereal pearl.
Its hair is white, the brightness of white light
Scattered in strings; yet its two eyes are heavens
Of liquid darkness, which the Deity
Within seems pouring, as a storm is poured
From jagged clouds, out of their arrowy lashes,
Tempering the cold and radiant air around,

220

225

With fire that is not brightness; in its hand 230
 It sways a quivering moonbeam, from whose point
 A guiding power directs the chariot's prow
 Over its wheelèd clouds, which as they roll
 Over the grass, and flowers, and waves, wake sounds,
 Sweet as a singing rain of silver dew. 235

Panthea. And from the other opening in the wood
 Rushes, with loud and whirlwind harmony,
 A sphere, which is as many thousand spheres,
 Solid as crystal, yet through all its mass
 Flow, as through empty space, music and light: 240
 Ten thousand orbs involving and involved,
 Purple and azure, white, and green, and golden,
 Sphere within sphere; and every space between
 Peopled with unimaginable shapes,
 Such as ghosts dream dwell in the lampless deep, 245
 Yet each inter-transpicuous, and they whirl
 Over each other with a thousand motions,
 Upon a thousand sightless axles spinning,
 And with the force of self-destroying swiftness,
 Intensely, slowly, solemnly roll on, 250
 Kindling with mingled sounds, and many tones,
 Intelligible words and music wild.
 With mighty whirl the multitudinous orb
 Grinds the bright brook into an azure mist
 Of elemental subtlety, like light; 255
 And the wild odour of the forest flowers,
 The music of the living grass and air,
 The emerald light of leaf-entangled beams
 Round its intense yet self-conflicting speed,
 Seem kneaded into one aëreal mass 260
 Which drowns the sense. Within the orb itself,
 Pillowed upon its alabaster arms,
 Like to a child o'erwearied with sweet toil,
 On its own folded wings, and wavy hair,
 The Spirit of the Earth is laid asleep, 265
 And you can see its little lips are moving,
 Amid the changing light of their own smiles,
 Like one who talks of what he loves in dream.

Ione. 'Tis only mocking the orb's harmony.

Panthea. And from a star upon its forehead, shoot, 270
 Like swords of azure fire, or golden spears
 With tyrant-quelling myrtle overtwinèd,
 Embleming heaven and earth united now,
 Vast beams like spokes of some invisible wheel
 Which whirl as the orb whirls, swifter than thought, 275
 Filling the abyss with sun-like lightnings,
 And perpendicular now, and now transverse,

242 white and green *B*; white, green 1820.
 276 lightnings *B*; lightning 1820.

274 spokes *B*, ed. 1839; spoke 1820.

Pierce the dark soil, and as they pierce and pass,
 Make bare the secrets of the earth's deep heart;
 Infinite mines of adamant and gold, 280
 Valueless stones, and unimagined gems,
 And caverns on crystalline columns poised
 With vegetable silver overspread;
 Wells of unfathomed fire, and water springs
 Whence the great sea, even as a child is fed, 285
 Whose vapours clothe earth's monarch mountain-tops
 With kingly, ermine snow. The beams flash on
 And make appear the melancholy ruins
 Of cancelled cycles; anchors, beaks of ships;
 Planks turned to marble; quivers, helms, and spears, 290
 And gorgon-headed targes, and the wheels
 Of scythèd chariots, and the emblazonry
 Of trophies, standards, and armorial beasts,
 Round which death laughed, sepulchred emblems
 Of dead destruction, ruin within ruin! 295
 The wrecks beside of many a city vast,
 Whose population which the earth grew over
 Was mortal, but not human; see, they lie,
 Their monstrous works, and uncouth skeletons,
 Their statues, homes and fanes; prodigious shapes 300
 Huddled in gray annihilation, split,
 Jammed in the hard, black deep; and over these,
 The anatomies of unknown wingèd things,
 And fishes which were isles of living scale,
 And serpents, bony chains, twisted around 305
 The iron crags, or within heaps of dust
 To which the tortuous strength of their last pangs
 Had crushed the iron crags; and over these
 The jagged alligator, and the might
 Of earth-convulsing behemoth, which once 310
 Were monarch beasts, and on the slimy shores,
 And weed-overgrown continents of earth,
 Increased and multiplied like summer worms
 On an abandoned corpse, till the blue globe
 Wrapped deluge round it like a cloak, and they 315
 Yelled, gasped, and were abolished; or some God
 Whose throne was in a comet, passed, and cried,
 'Be not!' And like my words they were no more.

The Earth.

The joy, the triumph, the delight, the madness!
 The boundless, overflowing, bursting gladness, 320
 The vaporous exultation not to be confined!
 Ha! ha! the animation of delight
 Which wraps me, like an atmosphere of light,
 And bears me as a cloud is borne by its own wind.

The Moon.

Brother mine, calm wanderer, 325
 Happy globe of land and air,
 Some Spirit is darted like a beam from thee,
 Which penetrates my frozen frame,
 And passes with the warmth of flame,
 With love, and odour, and deep melody 330
 Through me, through me!

The Earth.

Ha! ha! the caverns of my hollow mountains,
 My cloven fire-crags, sound-exulting fountains
 Laugh with a vast and inextinguishable laughter.
 The oceans, and the deserts, and the abysses, 335
 And the deep air's unmeasured wildernesses,
 Answer from all their clouds and billows, echoing after.

They cry aloud as I do. Sceptred curse,
 Who all our green and azure universe
 Threatenedst to muffle round with black destruction, sending 340
 A solid cloud to rain hot thunderstones,
 And splinter and knead down my children's bones,
 All I bring forth, to one void mass battering and blending,—

Until each crag-like tower, and storied column,
 Palace, and obelisk, and temple solemn, 345
 My imperial mountains crowned with cloud, and snow, and fire;
 My sea-like forests, every blade and blossom
 Which finds a grave or cradle in my bosom,
 Were stamped by thy strong hate into a lifeless mire:

How art thou sunk, withdrawn, covered, drunk up 350
 By thirsty nothing, as the brackish cup
 Drained by a desert-troop, a little drop for all;
 And from beneath, around, within, above,
 Filling thy void annihilation, love
 Burst in like light on caves cloven by the thunder-ball. 355

The Moon.

The snow upon my lifeless mountains
 Is loosened into living fountains,
 My solid oceans flow, and sing, and shine:
 A spirit from my heart bursts forth,
 It clothes with unexpected birth 360
 My cold bare bosom: Oh! it must be thine
 On mine, on mine!

Gazing on thee I feel, I know
 Green stalks burst forth, and bright flowers grow,

335-6 the abysses, And 1820, 1839; the abysses Of B.

355 the omitted 1820.

And living shapes upon my bosom move: 365
 Music is in the sea and air,
 Wingèd clouds soar here and there,
 Dark with the rain new buds are dreaming of:
 'Tis love, all love!

The Earth.

It interpenetrates my granite mass, 370
 Through tangled roots and trodden clay doth pass
 Into the utmost leaves and delicatest flowers;
 Upon the winds, among the clouds 'tis spread,
 It wakes a life in the forgotten dead,
 They breathe a spirit up from their obscurest bowers. 375

And like a storm bursting its cloudy prison
 With thunder, and with whirlwind, has arisen
 Out of the lampless caves of unimagined being:
 With earthquake shock and swiftness making shiver
 Thought's stagnant chaos, unremoved for ever, 380
 Till hate, and fear, and pain, light-vanquished shadows, fleeing,

Leave Man, who was a many-sided mirror,
 Which could distort to many a shape of error,
 This true fair world of things, a sea reflecting love;
 Which over all his kind, as the sun's heaven 385
 Gliding o'er ocean, smooth, serene, and even,
 Darting from starry depths radiance and life, doth move:

Leave Man, even as a leprous child is left,
 Who follows a sick beast to some warm cleft
 Of rocks, through which the might of healing springs is poured;
 Then when it wanders home with rosy smile, 391
 Unconscious, and its mother fears awhile
 It is a spirit, then, weeps on her child restored.

Man, oh, not men! a chain of linkèd thought,
 Of love and might to be divided not, 395
 Compelling the elements with adamant stress;
 As the sun rules, even with a tyrant's gaze,
 The unquiet republic of the maze
 Of planets, struggling fierce towards heaven's free wilderness.

Man, one harmonious soul of many a soul, 400
 Whose nature is its own divine control,
 Where all things flow to all, as rivers to the sea;
 Familiar acts are beautiful through love;
 Labour, and pain, and grief, in life's green grove
 Sport like tame beasts, none knew how gentle they could be! 405

His will, with all mean passions, bad delights,
 And selfish cares, its trembling satellites,

A spirit ill to guide, but mighty to obey,
 Is as a tempest-wingèd ship, whose helm
 Love rules, through waves which dare not overwhelm, 410
 Forcing life's wildest shores to own its sovereign sway.

All things confess his strength. Through the cold mass
 Of marble and of colour his dreams pass;
 Bright threads whence mothers weave the robes their children wear;
 Language is a perpetual Orphic song, 415
 Which rules with Dædal harmony a throng
 Of thoughts and forms, which else senseless and shapeless were.

The lightning is his slave; heaven's utmost deep
 Gives up her stars, and like a flock of sheep
 They pass before his eye, are numbered, and roll on! 420
 The tempest is his steed, he strides the air;
 And the abyss shouts from her depth laid bare,
 Heaven, hast thou secrets? Man unveils me; I have none.

The Moon.

The shadow of white death has passed
 From my path in heaven at last, 425
 A clinging shroud of solid frost and sleep;
 And through my newly-woven bowers,
 Wander happy paramours,
 Less mighty, but as mild as those who keep
 Thy vales more deep. 430

The Earth.

As the dissolving warmth of dawn may fold
 A half unfrozen dew-globe, green, and gold,
 And crystalline, till it becomes a wingèd mist,
 And wanders up the vault of the blue day,
 Outlives the noon, and on the sun's last ray 435
 Hangs o'er the sea, a fleece of fire and amethyst.

The Moon.

Thou art folded, thou art lying
 In the light which is undying
 Of thine own joy, and heaven's smile divine;
 All suns and constellations shower 440
 On thee a light, a life, a power
 Which doth array thy sphere; thou pourest thine
 On mine, on mine!

The Earth.

I spin beneath my pyramid of night,
 Which points into the heavens dreaming delight, 445
 Murmuring victorious joy in my enchanted sleep;
 As a youth lulled in love-dreams faintly sighing,
 Under the shadow of his beauty lying,
 Which round his rest a watch of light and warmth doth keep.

The Moon.

As in the soft and sweet eclipse,
 When soul meets soul on lovers' lips,
 High hearts are calm, and brightest eyes are dull;
 So when thy shadow falls on me,
 Then am I mute and still, by thee
 Covered; of thy love, Orb most beautiful,
 Full, oh, too full!

Thou art speeding round the sun
 Brightest world of many a one;
 Green and azure sphere which shinest
 With a light which is divinest
 Among all the lamps of Heaven
 To whom life and light is given;
 I, thy crystal paramour
 Borne beside thee by a power
 Like the polar Paradise,
 Magnet-like of lovers' eyes;
 I, a most enamoured maiden
 Whose weak brain is overladen
 With the pleasure of her love,
 Maniac-like around thee move
 Gazing, an insatiate bride,
 On thy form from every side
 Like a Mænad, round the cup
 Which Agave lifted up
 In the weird Cadmæan forest.
 Brother, wheresoe'er thou soarest
 I must hurry, whirl and follow
 Through the heavens wide and hollow,
 Sheltered by the warm embrace
 Of thy soul from hungry space,
 Drinking from thy sense and sight
 Beauty, majesty, and might,
 As a lover or a chameleon
 Grows like what it looks upon,
 As a violet's gentle eye
 Gazes on the azure sky
 Until its hue grows like what it beholds,
 As a gray and watery mist
 Glows like solid amethyst
 Athwart the western mountain it enfolds,
 When the sunset sleeps
 Upon its snow—

The Earth.

And the weak day weeps
 That it should be so.
 Oh, gentle Moon, the voice of thy delight
 Falls on me like thy clear and tender light

Soothing the seaman, borne the summer night,
 Through isles for ever calm;
 Oh, gentle Moon, thy crystal accents pierce
 The caverns of my pride's deep universe,
 Charming the tiger joy, whose tramlings fierce
 Made wounds which need thy balm.

500

Panthea. I rise as from a bath of sparkling water,
 A bath of azure light, among dark rocks,
 Out of the stream of sound.

Ione. Ah me! sweet sister,
 The stream of sound has ebbed away from us,
 And you pretend to rise out of its wave,
 Because your words fall like the clear, soft dew
 Shaken from a bathing wood-nymph's limbs and hair.

505

Panthea. Peace! peace! A mighty Power, which is as darkness, 510
 Is rising out of Earth, and from the sky
 Is showered like night, and from within the air
 Bursts, like eclipse which had been gathered up
 Into the pores of sunlight: the bright visions,
 Wherein the singing spirits rode and shone,
 Gleam like pale meteors through a watery night.

515

Ione. There is a sense of words upon mine ear.

Panthea. An universal sound like words: Oh, list!

Demogorgon.

Thou, Earth, calm empire of a happy soul,
 Sphere of divinest shapes and harmonies,
 Beautiful orb! gathering as thou dost roll
 The love which paves thy path along the skies:

520

The Earth.

I hear: I am as a drop of dew that dies.

Demogorgon.

Thou, Moon, which gazest on the nightly Earth
 With wonder, as it gazes upon thee;
 Whilst each to men, and beasts, and the swift birth
 Of birds, is beauty, love, calm, harmony:

525

The Moon.

I hear: I am a leaf shaken by thee!

Demogorgon.

Ye Kings of suns and stars, Dæmons and Gods,
 Aethereal Dominations, who possess
 Elysian, windless, fortunate abodes
 Beyond Heaven's constellated wilderness:

530

A Voice from above.

Our great Republic hears, we are blest, and bless.

Demogorgon.

Ye happy Dead, whom beams of brightest verse
Are clouds to hide, not colours to portray,
Whether your nature is that universe
Which once ye saw and suffered—

535

A Voice from beneath.

Or as they
Whom we have left, we change and pass away.

Demogorgon.

Ye elemental Genii, who have homes
From man's high mind even to the central stone
Of sullen lead; from heaven's star-fretted domes
To the dull weed some sea-worm battens on:

540

A confused Voice.

We hear: thy words waken Oblivion.

Demogorgon.

Spirits, whose homes are flesh: ye beasts and birds,
Ye worms, and fish; ye living leaves and buds;
Lightning and wind; and ye untameable herds,
Meteors and mists, which throng air's solitudes:—

545

A Voice.

Thy voice to us is wind among still woods.

Demogorgon.

Man, who wert once a despot and a slave;
A dupe and a deceiver; a decay;
A traveller from the cradle to the grave
Through the dim night of this immortal day:

550

All.

Speak: thy strong words may never pass away.

Demogorgon.

This is the day, which down the void abysm
At the Earth-born's spell yawns for Heaven's despotism,
And Conquest is dragged captive through the deep:

555

Love, from its awful throne of patient power
In the wise heart, from the last giddy hour
Of dread endurance, from the slippery, steep,
And narrow verge of crag-like agony, springs
And folds over the world its healing wings.

560

Gentleness, Virtue, Wisdom, and Endurance,
These are the seals of that most firm assurance
Which bars the pit over Destruction's strength;
And if, with infirm hand, Eternity,

565

Mother of many acts and hours, should free
The serpent that would clasp her with his length;

These are the spells by which to reassume
An empire o'er the disentangled doom.

To suffer woes which Hope thinks infinite; 570
To forgive wrongs darker than death or night;

To defy Power, which seems omnipotent;
To love, and bear; to hope till Hope creates
From its own wreck the thing it contemplates;

Neither to change, nor falter, nor repent; 575
This, like thy glory, Titan, is to be
Good, great and joyous, beautiful and free;
This is alone Life, Joy, Empire, and Victory.

CANCELLED FRAGMENTS OF PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

[First printed by Mr. C. D. Locock, *Examination of the Shelley MSS. at the Bodleian Library*, 1903, pp. 33-7.]

(following I. 37)

When thou descendst each night with open eyes
In torture, for a tyrant seldom sleeps,
Thou never;

(following I. 195)

Which thou henceforth art doomed to interweave
.

(following the first two words of I. 342)

[Of Hell:] I placed it in his choice to be
The crown, or trampled refuse of the world
With but one law itself a glorious boon—
I gave—
.

(following I. 707)

Second Spirit.

I leaped on the wings of the Earth-star damp
As it rose on the steam of a slaughtered camp—
The sleeping newt heard not our tramp
As swift as the wings of fire may pass—
We threaded the points of long thick grass
Which hide the green pools of the morass
But shook a water-serpent's couch
In a cleft skull, of many such
The widest; at the meteor's touch
The snake did seem to see in dream
Thrones and dungeons overthrown
Visions how unlike his own . . .
'Twas the hope the prophecy
Which begins and ends in thee
.

(following II. i. 110)

Lift up thine eyes Panthea—they pierce they burn!

Panthea.

Alas! I am consumed—I melt away

The fire is in my heart—

Asia.

Thine eyes burn burn!—

Hide them within thine hair—

Panthea.

O quench thy lips

I sink I perish

Asia.

Shelter me now—they burn

It is his spirit in their orbs . . . my life

Is ebbing fast—I cannot speak—

Panthea.

Rest, rest!

Sleep death annihilation pain! aught else

(following II. iv. 27)

Or looks which tell that while the lips are calm

And the eyes cold, the spirit weeps within

Tears like the sanguine sweat of agony;

UNCANCELLED PASSAGE

(following II. v. 71)

Asia.

You said that spirits spoke, but it was thee

Sweet sister, for even now thy curvèd lips

Tremble as if the sound were dying there

Not dead

Panthea.

Alas it was Prometheus spoke

Within me, and I know it must be so

I mixed my own weak nature with his love

. And my thoughts
Are like the many forests of a vale

Through which the might of whirlwind and of rain

Had passed—they rest rest through the evening light

As mine do now in thy beloved smile.

CANCELLED STAGE DIRECTIONS

(following I. 221)

The sound beneath as of earthquake and the driving of whirlwinds—The Ravine is split, and the Phantasm of Jupiter rises, surrounded by heavy clouds which dart forth lightning.

(following I. 520)

enter rushing by groups of horrible forms ; they speak as they pass in chorus

(following I. 552)

a shadow passes over the scene, and a piercing shriek is heard

NOTE ON PROMETHEUS UNBOUND, BY MRS. SHELLEY

ON the 12th of March, 1818, Shelley quitted England, never to return. His principal motive was the hope that his health would be improved by a milder climate ; he suffered very much during the winter previous to his emigration, and this decided his vacillating purpose. In December, 1817, he had written from Marlow to a friend, saying :

‘My health has been materially worse. My feelings at intervals are of a deadly and torpid kind, or awakened to such a state of unnatural and keen excitement that, only to instance the organ of sight, I find the very blades of grass and the boughs of distant trees present themselves to me with microscopic distinctness. Towards evening I sink into a state of lethargy and inanimation, and often remain for hours on the sofa between sleep and waking, a prey to the most painful irritability of thought. Such, with little intermission, is my condition. The hours devoted to study are selected with vigilant caution from among these periods of endurance. It is not for this that I think of travelling to Italy, even if I knew that Italy would relieve me. But I have experienced a decisive pulmonary attack ; and although at present it has passed away without any considerable vestige of its existence, yet this symptom sufficiently shows the true nature of my disease to be consumptive. It is to my advantage that this malady is in its nature slow, and, if one is sufficiently alive to its advances, is susceptible of cure from a warm climate. In the event of its assuming any decided shape, *it would be my duty* to go to Italy without delay. It is not mere health, but life, that I should seek, and that not for my own sake—I feel I am capable of trampling on all such weakness ; but for the sake of those to whom my life may be a source of happiness, utility, security, and honour, and to some of whom my death might be all that is the reverse.’

In almost every respect his journey to Italy was advantageous. He left behind friends to whom he was attached ; but cares of a thousand kinds, many springing from his lavish generosity, crowded round him in his native country, and, except the society of one or two friends, he had no compensation. The climate caused him to consume half his existence in helpless suffering. His dearest pleasure, the free enjoyment of the scenes of Nature, was marred by the same circumstance.

He went direct to Italy, avoiding even Paris, and did not make any pause till he arrived at Milan. The first aspect of Italy enchanted Shelley ; it seemed a garden of delight placed beneath a clearer and brighter heaven than any he had lived under before. He wrote long descriptive letters during the first year of his residence in Italy, which, as compositions, are the most beautiful in the world, and show how truly he appreciated and studied the wonders of Nature and Art in that divine land.

The poetical spirit within him speedily revived with all the power and with more than all the beauty of his first attempts. He meditated three subjects

as the groundwork for lyrical dramas. One was the story of Tasso; of this a slight fragment of a song of Tasso remains. The other was one founded on the *Book of Job*, which he never abandoned in idea, but of which no trace remains among his papers. The third was the *Prometheus Unbound*. The Greek tragedians were now his most familiar companions in his wanderings, and the sublime majesty of Æschylus filled him with wonder and delight. The father of Greek tragedy does not possess the pathos of Sophocles, nor the variety and tenderness of Euripides; the interest on which he founds his dramas is often elevated above human vicissitudes into the mighty passions and throes of gods and demi-gods: such fascinated the abstract imagination of Shelley.

We spent a month at Milan, visiting the Lake of Como during that interval. Thence we passed in succession to Pisa, Leghorn, the Baths of Lucca, Venice, Este, Rome, Naples, and back again to Rome, whither we returned early in March, 1819. During all this time Shelley meditated the subject of his drama, and wrote portions of it. Other poems were composed during this interval, and while at the Bagni di Lucca he translated Plato's *Symposium*. But, though he diversified his studies, his thoughts centred in the *Prometheus*. At last, when at Rome, during a bright and beautiful Spring, he gave up his whole time to the composition. The spot selected for his study was, as he mentions in his preface, the mountainous ruins of the Baths of Caracalla. These are little known to the ordinary visitor at Rome. He describes them in a letter, with that poetry and delicacy and truth of description which render his narrated impressions of scenery of unequalled beauty and interest.

At first he completed the drama in three acts. It was not till several months after, when at Florence, that he conceived that a fourth act, a sort of hymn of rejoicing in the fulfilment of the prophecies with regard to Prometheus, ought to be added to complete the composition.

The prominent feature of Shelley's theory of the destiny of the human species was that evil is not inherent in the system of the creation, but an accident that might be expelled. This also forms a portion of Christianity: God made earth and man perfect, till he, by his fall,

‘Brought death into the world and all our woe.’

Shelley believed that mankind had only to will that there should be no evil, and there would be none. It is not my part in these Notes to notice the arguments that have been urged against this opinion, but to mention the fact that he entertained it, and was indeed attached to it with fervent enthusiasm. That man could be so perfectionized as to be able to expel evil from his own nature, and from the greater part of the creation, was the cardinal point of his system. And the subject he loved best to dwell on was the image of One warring with the Evil Principle, oppressed not only by it, but by all—even the good, who were deluded into considering evil a necessary portion of humanity; a victim full of fortitude and hope and the spirit of triumph emanating from a reliance in the ultimate omnipotence of Good. Such he had depicted in his last poem, when he made Laon the enemy and the victim of tyrants. He now took a more idealized image of the same subject. He followed certain classical authorities in figuring Saturn as the good principle, Jupiter the usurping evil one, and Prometheus as the regenerator, who, unable to bring mankind back to primitive innocence, used knowledge as a weapon to defeat evil, by leading mankind, beyond the state wherein they are sinless through

ignorance, to that in which they are virtuous through wisdom. Jupiter punished the temerity of the Titan by chaining him to a rock of Caucasus, and causing a vulture to devour his still-renewed heart. There was a prophecy afloat in heaven portending the fall of Jove, the secret of averting which was known only to Prometheus; and the god offered freedom from torture on condition of its being communicated to him. According to the mythological story, this referred to the offspring of Thetis, who was destined to be greater than his father. Prometheus at last bought pardon for his crime of enriching mankind with his gifts, by revealing the prophecy. Hercules killed the vulture, and set him free; and Thetis was married to Peleus, the father of Achilles.

Shelley adapted the catastrophe of this story to his peculiar views. The son greater than his father, born of the nuptials of Jupiter and Thetis, was to dethrone Evil, and bring back a happier reign than that of Saturn. Prometheus defies the power of his enemy, and endures centuries of torture; till the hour arrives when Jove, blind to the real event, but darkly guessing that some great good to himself will flow, espouses Thetis. At the moment, the Primal Power of the world drives him from his usurped throne, and Strength, in the person of Hercules, liberates Humanity, typified in Prometheus, from the tortures generated by evil done or suffered. Asia, one of the Oceanides, is the wife of Prometheus—she was, according to other mythological interpretations, the same as Venus and Nature. When the benefactor of mankind is liberated, Nature resumes the beauty of her prime, and is united to her husband, the emblem of the human race, in perfect and happy union. In the Fourth Act, the Poet gives further scope to his imagination, and idealizes the forms of creation—such as we know them, instead of such as they appeared to the Greeks. Maternal Earth, the mighty parent, is superseded by the Spirit of the Earth, the guide of our planet through the realms of sky; while his fair and weaker companion and attendant, the Spirit of the Moon, receives bliss from the annihilation of Evil in the superior sphere.

Shelley develops, more particularly in the lyrics of this drama, his abstruse and imaginative theories with regard to the Creation. It requires a mind as subtle and penetrating as his own to understand the mystic meanings scattered throughout the poem. They elude the ordinary reader by their abstraction and delicacy of distinction, but they are far from vague. It was his design to write prose metaphysical essays on the nature of Man, which would have served to explain much of what is obscure in his poetry; a few scattered fragments of observations and remarks alone remain. He considered these philosophical views of Mind and Nature to be instinct with the intensest spirit of poetry.

More popular poets clothe the ideal with familiar and sensible imagery. Shelley loved to idealize the real—to gift the mechanism of the material universe with a soul and a voice, and to bestow such also on the most delicate and abstract emotions and thoughts of the mind. Sophocles was his great master in this species of imagery.

I find in one of his manuscript books some remarks on a line in the *Œdipus Tyrannus*, which show at once the critical subtlety of Shelley's mind, and explain his apprehension of those 'minute and remote distinctions of feeling, whether relative to external nature or the living beings which surround us,' which he pronounces, in the letter quoted in the note to the *Revolt of Islam*, to comprehend all that is sublime in man.

'In the Greek Shakespeare, Sophocles, we find the image,

Πολλὰς δ' ὁδοὺς ἐλθόντα φροντίδος πλάνοις :

a line of almost unfathomable depth of poetry ; yet how simple are the images in which it is arrayed !

"Coming to many ways in the wanderings of careful thought."

If the words ὁδοὺς and πλάνοις had not been used, the line might have been explained in a metaphorical instead of an absolute sense, as we say "*ways* and means," and "*wanderings*" for error and confusion. But they meant literally paths or roads, such as we tread with our feet ; and wanderings, such as a man makes when he loses himself in a desert, or roams from city to city—as Œdipus, the speaker of this verse, was destined to wander, blind and asking charity. What a picture does this line suggest of the mind as a wilderness of intricate paths, wide as the universe, which is here made its symbol ; a world within a world which he who seeks some knowledge with respect to what he ought to do searches throughout, as he would search the external universe for some valued thing which was hidden from him upon its surface.'

In reading Shelley's poetry, we often find similar verses, resembling, but not imitating the Greek in this species of imagery ; for, though he adopted the style, he gifted it with that originality of form and colouring which sprung from his own genius.

In the *Prometheus Unbound*, Shelley fulfils the promise quoted from a letter in the Note on the *Revolt of Islam*¹. The tone of the composition is calmer and more majestic, the poetry more perfect as a whole, and the imagination displayed at once more pleasingly beautiful and more varied and daring. The description of the Hours, as they are seen in the cave of Demogorgon, is an instance of this—it fills the mind as the most charming picture—we long to see an artist at work to bring to our view the

'cars drawn by rainbow-wingèd steeds
Which trample the dim winds: in each there stands
A wild-eyed charioteer urging their flight.
Some look behind, as fiends pursued them there,
And yet I see no shapes but the keen stars:
Others, with burning eyes, lean forth, and drink
With eager lips the wind of their own speed,
As if the thing they loved fled on before,
And now, even now, they clasped it. Their bright locks
Stream like a comet's flashing hair: they all
Sweep onward.'

Through the whole poem there reigns a sort of calm and holy spirit of love ; it soothes the tortured, and is hope to the expectant, till the prophecy is fulfilled, and Love, untainted by any evil, becomes the law of the world.

England had been rendered a painful residence to Shelley, as much by the sort of persecution with which in those days all men of liberal opinions were

¹ While correcting the proof-sheets of that poem, it struck me that the poet had indulged in an exaggerated view of the evils of restored despotism ; which, however injurious and degrading, were less openly sanguinary than the triumph of anarchy, such as it appeared in France at the close of the last century. But at this time a book, *Scenes of Spanish Life*, translated by Lieutenant Crawford from the German of Dr. Huber, of Rostock, fell into my hands. The account of the triumph of the priests and the serviles, after the French invasion of Spain in 1823, bears a strong and frightful resemblance to some of the descriptions of the massacre of the patriots in the *Revolt of Islam*.

visited, and by the injustice he had lately endured in the Court of Chancery, as by the symptoms of disease which made him regard a visit to Italy as necessary to prolong his life. An exile, and strongly impressed with the feeling that the majority of his countrymen regarded him with sentiments of aversion such as his own heart could experience towards none, he sheltered himself from such disgusting and painful thoughts in the calm retreats of poetry, and built up a world of his own—with the more pleasure, since he hoped to induce some one or two to believe that the earth might become such, did mankind themselves consent. The charm of the Roman climate helped to clothe his thoughts in greater beauty than they had ever worn before. And, as he wandered among the ruins made one with Nature in their decay, or gazed on the Praxitelean shapes that throng the Vatican, the Capitol, and the palaces of Rome, his soul imbibed forms of loveliness which became a portion of itself. There are many passages in the *Prometheus* which show the intense delight he received from such studies, and give back the impression with a beauty of poetical description peculiarly his own. He felt this, as a poet must feel when he satisfies himself by the result of his labours; and he wrote from Rome, 'My *Prometheus Unbound* is just finished, and in a month or two I shall send it. It is a drama, with characters and mechanism of a kind yet unattempted; and I think the execution is better than any of my former attempts.'

I may mention, for the information of the more critical reader, that the verbal alterations in this edition of *Prometheus* are made from a list of errata written by Shelley himself.

THE CENCI

A TRAGEDY IN FIVE ACTS

[Composed at Rome and near Leghorn (Villa Valsovano), May–August 8, 1819; published 1820 (spring) by C. & J. Ollier, London. This edition of two hundred and fifty copies was printed in Italy 'because,' writes Shelley to Peacock, Sept. 21, 1819, 'it costs, with all duties and freightage, about half what it would cost in London.' A Table of Errata in Mrs. Shelley's handwriting is printed by Forman in *The Shelley Library*, p. 91. A second edition, published by Ollier in 1821 (C. H. Reynell, printer), embodies the corrections indicated in this Table. No MS. of *The Cenci* is known to exist. Our text follows that of the second edition (1821); variations of the first (Italian) edition, the title-page of which bears date 1819, are given in the footnotes. The text of the *Poetical Works*, 1839, 1st and 2nd edd. (Mrs. Shelley), follows for the most part that of the *editio princeps* of 1819.]

DEDICATION

TO LEIGH HUNT, Esq.

MY DEAR FRIEND—I inscribe with your name, from a distant country, and after an absence whose months have seemed years, this the latest of my literary efforts.

Those writings which I have hitherto published, have been little else than visions which impersonate my own apprehensions of the beautiful and the just. I can also perceive in them the literary defects incidental to youth and

impatience ; they are dreams of what ought to be, or may be. The drama which I now present to you is a sad reality. I lay aside the presumptuous attitude of an instructor, and am content to paint, with such colours as my own heart furnishes, that which has been.

Had I known a person more highly endowed than yourself with all that it becomes a man to possess, I had solicited for this work the ornament of his name. One more gentle, honourable, innocent and brave ; one of more exalted toleration for all who do and think evil, and yet himself more free from evil ; one who knows better how to receive, and how to confer a benefit, though he must ever confer far more than he can receive ; one of simpler, and, in the highest sense of the word, of purer life and manners I never knew : and I had already been fortunate in friendships when your name was added to the list.

In that patient and irreconcilable enmity with domestic and political tyranny and imposture which the tenor of your life has illustrated, and which, had I health and talents, should illustrate mine, let us, comforting each other in our task, live and die.

All happiness attend you ! Your affectionate friend,

PERCY B. SHELLEY.

ROME, *May 29, 1819.*

PREFACE

A MANUSCRIPT was communicated to me during my travels in Italy, which was copied from the archives of the Cenci Palace at Rome, and contains a detailed account of the horrors which ended in the extinction of one of the noblest and richest families of that city during the Pontificate of Clement VIII, in the year 1599. The story is, that an old man having spent his life in debauchery and wickedness, conceived at length an implacable hatred towards his children ; which showed itself towards one daughter under the form of an incestuous passion, aggravated by every circumstance of cruelty and violence. This daughter, after long and vain attempts to escape from what she considered a perpetual contamination both of body and mind, at length plotted with her mother-in-law and brother to murder their common tyrant. The young maiden, who was urged to this tremendous deed by an impulse which overpowered its horror, was evidently a most gentle and amiable being, a creature formed to adorn and be admired, and thus violently thwarted from her nature by the necessity of circumstance and opinion. The deed was quickly discovered, and, in spite of the most earnest prayers made to the Pope by the highest persons in Rome, the criminals were put to death. The old man had during his life repeatedly bought his pardon from the Pope for capital crimes of the most enormous and unspeakable kind, at the price of a hundred thousand crowns ; the death therefore of his victims can scarcely be accounted for by the love of justice. The Pope, among other motives for severity, probably felt that whoever killed the Count Cenci deprived his treasury of a certain and copious source of revenue¹. Such a story, if told so as to present to the reader all the feelings of those who once acted it, their hopes

¹ The Papal Government formerly took the most extraordinary precautions against the publicity of facts which offer so tragical a demonstration of its own wickedness and weakness ; so that the communication of the MS. had become, until very lately, a matter of some difficulty.

and fears, their confidences and misgivings, their various interests, passions, and opinions, acting upon and with each other, yet all conspiring to one tremendous end, would be as a light to make apparent some of the most dark and secret caverns of the human heart.

On my arrival at Rome I found that the story of the Cenci was a subject not to be mentioned in Italian society without awakening a deep and breathless interest; and that the feelings of the company never failed to incline to a romantic pity for the wrongs, and a passionate exculpation of the horrible deed to which they urged her, who has been mingled two centuries with the common dust. All ranks of people knew the outlines of this history, and participated in the overwhelming interest which it seems to have the magic of exciting in the human heart. I had a copy of Guido's picture of Beatrice which is preserved in the Colonna Palace, and my servant instantly recognized it as the portrait of *La Cenci*.

This national and universal interest which the story produces and has produced for two centuries and among all ranks of people in a great City, where the imagination is kept for ever active and awake, first suggested to me the conception of its fitness for a dramatic purpose. In fact it is a tragedy which has already received, from its capacity of awakening and sustaining the sympathy of men, approbation and success. Nothing remained as I imagined, but to clothe it to the apprehensions of my countrymen in such language and action as would bring it home to their hearts. The deepest and the sublimest tragic compositions, *King Lear* and the two plays in which the tale of *Œdipus* is told, were stories which already existed in tradition, as matters of popular belief and interest, before Shakespeare and Sophocles made them familiar to the sympathy of all succeeding generations of mankind.

This story of the Cenci is indeed eminently fearful and monstrous: anything like a dry exhibition of it on the stage would be insupportable. The person who would treat such a subject must increase the ideal, and diminish the actual horror of the events, so that the pleasure which arises from the poetry which exists in these tempestuous sufferings and crimes may mitigate the pain of the contemplation of the moral deformity from which they spring. There must also be nothing attempted to make the exhibition subservient to what is vulgarly termed a moral purpose. The highest moral purpose aimed at in the highest species of the drama, is the teaching the human heart, through its sympathies and antipathies, the knowledge of itself; in proportion to the possession of which knowledge, every human being is wise, just, sincere, tolerant and kind. If dogmas can do more, it is well: but a drama is no fit place for the enforcement of them. Undoubtedly, no person can be truly dishonoured by the act of another; and the fit return to make to the most enormous injuries is kindness and forbearance, and a resolution to convert the injurer from his dark passions by peace and love. Revenge, retaliation, atonement, are pernicious mistakes. If Beatrice had thought in this manner she would have been wiser and better; but she would never have been a tragic character: the few whom such an exhibition would have interested, could never have been sufficiently interested for a dramatic purpose, from the want of finding sympathy in their interest among the mass who surround them. It is in the restless and anatomizing casuistry with which men seek the justification of Beatrice, yet feel that she has done what needs justification; it is in the superstitious horror with which they contemplate

alike her wrongs and their revenge, that the dramatic character of what she did and suffered, consists.

I have endeavoured as nearly as possible to represent the characters as they probably were, and have sought to avoid the error of making them actuated by my own conceptions of right or wrong, false or true: thus under a thin veil converting names and actions of the sixteenth century into cold impersonations of my own mind. They are represented as Catholics, and as Catholics deeply tinged with religion. To a Protestant apprehension there will appear something unnatural in the earnest and perpetual sentiment of the relations between God and men which pervade the tragedy of the Cenci. It will especially be startled at the combination of an undoubting persuasion of the truth of the popular religion with a cool and determined perseverance in enormous guilt. But religion in Italy is not, as in Protestant countries, a cloak to be worn on particular days; or a passport which those who do not wish to be railed at carry with them to exhibit; or a gloomy passion for penetrating the impenetrable mysteries of our being, which terrifies its possessor at the darkness of the abyss to the brink of which it has conducted him. Religion coexists, as it were, in the mind of an Italian Catholic, with a faith in that of which all men have the most certain knowledge. It is interwoven with the whole fabric of life. It is adoration, faith, submission, penitence, blind admiration; not a rule for moral conduct. It has no necessary connection with any one virtue. The most atrocious villain may be rigidly devout, and without any shock to established faith, confess himself to be so. Religion pervades intensely the whole frame of society, and is according to the temper of the mind which it inhabits, a passion, a persuasion, an excuse, a refuge; never a check. Cenci himself built a chapel in the court of his Palace, and dedicated it to St. Thomas the Apostle, and established masses for the peace of his soul. Thus in the first scene of the fourth act Lucretia's design in exposing herself to the consequences of an expostulation with Cenci after having administered the opiate, was to induce him by a feigned tale to confess himself before death; this being esteemed by Catholics as essential to salvation; and she only relinquishes her purpose when she perceives that her perseverance would expose Beatrice to new outrages.

I have avoided with great care in writing this play the introduction of what is commonly called mere poetry, and I imagine there will scarcely be found a detached simile or a single isolated description, unless Beatrice's description of the chasm appointed for her father's murder should be judged to be of that nature¹.

In a dramatic composition the imagery and the passion should interpenetrate one another, the former being reserved simply for the full development and illustration of the latter. Imagination is as the immortal God which should assume flesh for the redemption of mortal passion. It is thus that the most remote and the most familiar imagery may alike be fit for dramatic purposes when employed in the illustration of strong feeling, which raises what is low, and levels to the apprehension that which is lofty, casting over all the shadow of its own greatness. In other respects, I have written more carelessly; that is, without an over-fastidious and learned choice of words. In this respect

¹ An idea in this speech was suggested by a most sublime passage in *El Purgatorio de San Patricio* of Calderon; the only plagiarism which I have intentionally committed in the whole piece.

I entirely agree with those modern critics who assert that in order to move men to true sympathy we must use the familiar language of men, and that our great ancestors the ancient English poets are the writers, a study of whom might incite us to do that for our own age which they have done for theirs. But it must be the real language of men in general and not that of any particular class to whose society the writer happens to belong. So much for what I have attempted; I need not be assured that success is a very different matter; particularly for one whose attention has but newly been awakened to the study of dramatic literature.

I endeavoured whilst at Rome to observe such monuments of this story as might be accessible to a stranger. The portrait of Beatrice at the Colonna Palace is admirable as a work of art: it was taken by Guido during her confinement in prison. But it is most interesting as a just representation of one of the loveliest specimens of the workmanship of Nature. There is a fixed and pale composure upon the features: she seems sad and stricken down in spirit, yet the despair thus expressed is lightened by the patience of gentleness. Her head is bound with folds of white drapery from which the yellow strings of her golden hair escape, and fall about her neck. The moulding of her face is exquisitely delicate; the eyebrows are distinct and arched: the lips have that permanent meaning of imagination and sensibility which suffering has not repressed and which it seems as if death scarcely could extinguish. Her forehead is large and clear; her eyes, which we are told were remarkable for their vivacity, are swollen with weeping and lustreless, but beautifully tender and serene. In the whole mien there is a simplicity and dignity which, united with her exquisite loveliness and deep sorrow, are inexpressibly pathetic. Beatrice Cenci appears to have been one of those rare persons in whom energy and gentleness dwell together without destroying one another: her nature was simple and profound. The crimes and miseries in which she was an actor and a sufferer are as the mask and the mantle in which circumstances clothed her for her impersonation on the scene of the world.

The Cenci Palace is of great extent; and though in part modernized, there yet remains a vast and gloomy pile of feudal architecture in the same state as during the dreadful scenes which are the subject of this tragedy. The Palace is situated in an obscure corner of Rome, near the quarter of the Jews, and from the upper windows you see the immense ruins of Mount Palatine half hidden under their profuse overgrowth of trees. There is a court in one part of the Palace (perhaps that in which Cenci built the Chapel to St. Thomas), supported by granite columns and adorned with antique friezes of fine workmanship, and built up, according to the ancient Italian fashion, with balcony over balcony of open-work. One of the gates of the Palace formed of immense stones and leading through a passage, dark and lofty and opening into gloomy subterranean chambers, struck me particularly.

Of the Castle of Petrella, I could obtain no further information than that which is to be found in the manuscript.

DRAMATIS PERSONÆ

COUNT FRANCESCO CENCI.

GIACOMO, } *his Sons.*
BERNARDO, }

CARDINAL CAMILLO.

ORSINO, *a Prelate.*SAVELLA, *the Pope's Legate.*OLIMPIO, } *Assassins.*
MARZIO, }ANDREA, *Servant to Cenci.*

Nobles, Judges, Guards, Servants.

LUCRETIA, *Wife of CENCI, and Step-mother of his children.*BEATRICE, *his Daughter.*

The SCENE lies principally in Rome, but changes during the Fourth Act to Petrella, a castle among the Apulian Apennines.

TIME. During the Pontificate of Clement VIII.

ACT I

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in the Cenci Palace.**Enter* COUNT CENCI, *and* CARDINAL CAMILLO.

Camillo. That matter of the murder is hushed up
If you consent to yield his Holiness
Your fief that lies beyond the Pincian gate.—
It needed all my interest in the conclave
To bend him to this point: he said that you
Bought perilous impunity with your gold;
That crimes like yours if once or twice compounded
Enriched the Church, and respited from hell
An erring soul which might repent and live:—
But that the glory and the interest
Of the high throne he fills, little consist
With making it a daily mart of guilt
As manifold and hideous as the deeds
Which you scarce hide from men's revolted eyes.

Cenci. The third of my possessions—let it go!
Ay, I once heard the nephew of the Pope
Had sent his architect to view the ground,
Meaning to build a villa on my vines
The next time I compounded with his uncle:
I little thought he should outwit me so!
Henceforth no witness—not the lamp—shall see
That which the vassal threatened to divulge
Whose throat is choked with dust for his reward.
The deed he saw could not have rated higher
Than his most worthless life:—it angers me!
Respited me from Hell!—So may the Devil
Respite their souls from Heaven. No doubt Pope Clement,
And his most charitable nephews, pray
That the Apostle Peter and the Saints
Will grant for their sake that I long enjoy
Strength, wealth, and pride, and lust, and length of days

13 *As ed. 1821; So edd. 1819, 1839.*25 *Than ed. 1839; That edd. 1819, 1821.*26 *Respited me from ed. 1821; Respited from edd. 1819, 1839.*

Wherein to act the deeds which are the stewards
Of their revenue.—But much yet remains
To which they show no title.

Camillo.

Oh, Count Cenci!

So much that thou mightst honourably live 35
And reconcile thyself with thine own heart
And with thy God, and with the offended world.
How hideously look deeds of lust and blood
Through those snow white and venerable hairs!—
Your children should be sitting round you now, 40
But that you fear to read upon their looks
The shame and misery you have written there.
Where is your wife? Where is your gentle daughter?
Methinks her sweet looks, which make all things else
Beauteous and glad, might kill the fiend within you. 45
Why is she barred from all society
But her own strange and uncomplaining wrongs?
Talk with me, Count,—you know I mean you well.
I stood beside your dark and fiery youth
Watching its bold and bad career, as men 50
Watch meteors, but it vanished not—I marked
Your desperate and remorseless manhood; now
Do I behold you in dishonoured age
Charged with a thousand unrepented crimes.
Yet I have ever hoped you would amend, 55
And in that hope have saved your life three times.

Cenci. For which Aldobrandino owes you now
My fief beyond the Pincian.—Cardinal,
One thing, I pray you, recollect henceforth,
And so we shall converse with less restraint. 60
A man you knew spoke of my wife and daughter—
He was accustomed to frequent my house;
So the next day *his* wife and daughter came
And asked if I had seen him; and I smiled:
I think they never saw him any more. 65

Camillo. Thou execrable man, beware!—

Cenci.

Of thee?

Nay this is idle:—We should know each other.
As to my character for what men call crime
Seeing I please my senses as I list,
And vindicate that right with force or guile, 70
It is a public matter, and I care not
If I discuss it with you. I may speak
Alike to you and my own conscious heart—
For you give out that you have half reformed me,
Therefore strong vanity will keep you silent 75
If fear should not; both will, I do not doubt.
All men delight in sensual luxury,
All men enjoy revenge; and most exult
Over the tortures they can never feel—

Flattering their secret peace with others' pain. 80
 But I delight in nothing else. I love
 The sight of agony, and the sense of joy,
 When this shall be another's, and that mine.
 And I have no remorse and little fear,
 Which are, I think, the checks of other men. 85
 This mood has grown upon me, until now
 Any design my captious fancy makes
 The picture of its wish, and it forms none
 But such as men like you would start to know,
 Is as my natural food and rest debarred 90
 Until it be accomplished.

Camillo. Art thou not
 Most miserable?

Cenci. Why, miserable?—
 No.—I am what your theologians call
 Hardened;—which they must be in impudence,
 So to revile a man's peculiar taste. 95
 True, I was happier than I am, while yet
 Manhood remained to act the thing I thought;
 While lust was sweeter than revenge; and now
 Invention palls:—Ay, we must all grow old—
 And but that there yet remains a deed to act 100
 Whose horror might make sharp an appetite
 Duller than mine—I'd do—I know not what.
 When I was young I thought of nothing else
 But pleasure; and I fed on honey sweets:
 Men, by St. Thomas! cannot live like bees,
 And I grew tired:—yet, till I killed a foe, 105
 And heard his groans, and heard his children's groans,
 Knew I not what delight was else on earth,
 Which now delights me little. I the rather
 Look on such pangs as terror ill conceals, 110
 The dry fixed eyeball; the pale quivering lip,
 Which tell me that the spirit weeps within
 Tears bitterer than the bloody sweat of Christ.
 I rarely kill the body, which preserves,
 Like a strong prison, the soul within my power, 115
 Wherein I feed it with the breath of fear
 For hourly pain.

Camillo. Hell's most abandoned fiend
 Did never, in the drunkenness of guilt,
 Speak to his heart as now you speak to me;
 I thank my God that I believe you not. 120

Enter ANDREA.

Andrea. My Lord, a gentleman from Salamanca
 Would speak with you.

Cenci. Bid him attend me in
 The grand saloon. [Exit ANDREA

Camillo. Farewell; and I will pray
Almighty God that thy false, impious words
Tempt not his spirit to abandon thee. [Exit CAMILLO. 126]

Cenci. The third of my possessions! I must use
Close husbandry, or gold, the old man's sword,
Falls from my withered hand. But yesterday
There came an order from the Pope to make
Fourfold provision for my cursèd sons; 130
Whom I had sent from Rome to Salamanca,
Hoping some accident might cut them off;
And meaning if I could to starve them there.
I pray thee, God, send some quick death upon them!
Bernardo and my wife could not be worse 135
If dead and damned:—then, as to Beatrice—

[Looking around him suspiciously.]

I think they cannot hear me at that door;
What if they should? And yet I need not speak
Though the heart triumphs with itself in words.
O, thou most silent air, that shalt not hear 140
What now I think! Thou, pavement, which I tread
Towards her chamber,—let your echoes talk
Of my imperious step scorning surprise,
But not of my intent!—Andrea!

Enter ANDREA.

Andrea. My lord?

Cenci. Bid Beatrice attend me in her chamber 145
This evening:—no, at midnight and alone. [Exeunt.]

SCENE II.—*A Garden of the Cenci Palace. Enter BEATRICE and ORSINO, as in conversation.*

Beatrice. Pervert not truth,
Orsino. You remember where we held
That conversation;—nay, we see the spot
Even from this cypress;—two long years are past
Since, on an April midnight, underneath 5
The moonlight ruins of mount Palatine,
I did confess to you my secret mind.

Orsino. You said you loved me then.

Beatrice. You are a Priest,
Speak to me not of love.

Orsino. I may obtain
The dispensation of the Pope to marry. 10
Because I am a Priest do you believe
Your image, as the hunter some struck deer,
Follows me not whether I wake or sleep?

Beatrice. As I have said, speak to me not of love;
Had you a dispensation I have not; 15
Nor will I leave this home of misery

131 Whom I had *ed.* 1821; Whom I have *edd.* 1819, 1839.
shall *edd.* 1819, 1839.

140 that shalt *ed.* 1821; that

Whilst my poor Bernard, and that gentle lady
 To whom I owe life, and these virtuous thoughts,
 Must suffer what I still have strength to share.
 Alas, Orsino! All the love that once
 I felt for you, is turned to bitter pain.
 Ours was a youthful contract, which you first
 Broke, by assuming vows no Pope will loose.
 And thus I love you still, but holily,
 Even as a sister or a spirit might;
 And so I swear a cold fidelity.
 And it is well perhaps we shall not marry.
 You have a sly, equivocating vein
 That suits me not.—Ah, wretched that I am!
 Where shall I turn? Even now you look on me
 As you were not my friend, and as if you
 Discovered that I thought so, with false smiles
 Making my true suspicion seem your wrong.
 Ah, no! forgive me; sorrow makes me seem
 Sterner than else my nature might have been;
 I have a weight of melancholy thoughts,
 And they forbode,—but what can they forbode
 Worse than I now endure?

Orsino. All will be well.
 Is the petition yet prepared? You know
 My zeal for all you wish, sweet Beatrice;
 Doubt not but I will use my utmost skill
 So that the Pope attend to your complaint.

Beatrice. Your zeal for all I wish;—Ah me, you are cold!
 Your utmost skill . . . speak but one word . . . (*aside*) Alas!
 Weak and deserted creature that I am,
 Here I stand bickering with my only friend!
 This night my father gives a sumptuous feast,
 Orsino; he has heard some happy news
 From Salamanca, from my brothers there,
 And with this outward show of love he mocks
 His inward hate. 'Tis bold hypocrisy,
 For he would gladlier celebrate their deaths,
 Which I have heard him pray for on his knees:
 Great God! that such a father should be mine!
 But there is mighty preparation made,
 And all our kin, the Cenci, will be there,
 And all the chief nobility of Rome.
 And he has bidden me and my pale Mother
 Attire ourselves in festival array.
 Poor lady! She expects some happy change
 In his dark spirit from this act; I none.
 At supper I will give you the petition:
 Till when—farewell.

Orsino. Farewell. (*Exit BEATRICE.*) I know the Pope

Will ne'er absolve me from my priestly vow
 But by absolving me from the revenue 65
 Of many a wealthy see; and, Beatrice,
 I think to win thee at an easier rate.
 Nor shall he read her eloquent petition:
 He might bestow her on some poor relation
 Of his sixth cousin, as he did her sister, 70
 And I should be debarred from all access.
 Then as to what she suffers from her father,
 In all this there is much exaggeration:—
 Old men are testy and will have their way;
 A man may stab his enemy, or his vassal, 75
 And live a free life as to wine or women,
 And with a peevish temper may return
 To a dull home, and rate his wife and children;
 Daughters and wives call this foul tyranny.
 I shall be well content if on my conscience 80
 There rest no heavier sin than what they suffer
 From the devices of my love—a net
 From which she shall escape not. Yet I fear
 Her subtle mind, her awe-inspiring gaze,
 Whose beams anatomize me nerve by nerve 85
 And lay me bare, and make me blush to see
 My hidden thoughts.—Ah, no! A friendless girl
 Who clings to me, as to her only hope:—
 I were a fool, not less than if a panther
 Were panic-stricken by the antelope's eye, 90
 If she escape me. *[Exit.]*

SCENE III.—*A Magnificent Hall in the Cenci Palace. A Banquet.*

Enter CENCI, LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, ORSINO, CAMILLO, NOBLES.

Cenci. Welcome, my friends and kinsmen; welcome ye,
 Princes and Cardinals, pillars of the church,
 Whose presence honours our festivity.
 I have too long lived like an anchorite,
 And in my absence from your merry meetings 5
 An evil word is gone abroad of me;
 But I do hope that you, my noble friends,
 When you have shared the entertainment here,
 And heard the pious cause for which 'tis given,
 And we have pledged a health or two together, 10
 Will think me flesh and blood as well as you;
 Sinful indeed, for Adam made all so,
 But tender-hearted, meek and pitiful.

First Guest. In truth, my Lord, you seem too light of heart,
 Too sprightly and companionable a man, 15
 To act the deeds that rumour pins on you.
(To his Companion.) I never saw such blithe and open cheer
 In any eye!

Second Guest. Some most desired event,
In which we all demand a common joy,
Has brought us hither; let us hear it, Count.

20

Cenci. It is indeed a most desired event.
If, when a parent from a parent's heart
Lifts from this earth to the great Father of all
A prayer, both when he lays him down to sleep,
And when he rises up from dreaming it;
One supplication, one desire, one hope,
That he would grant a wish for his two sons,
Even all that he demands in their regard—
And suddenly beyond his dearest hope
It is accomplished, he should then rejoice,
And call his friends and kinsmen to a feast,
And task their love to grace his merriment,—
Then honour me thus far—for I am he.

25

30

Beatrice (to LUCRETIA). Great God! How horrible! Some dreadful ill
Must have befallen my brothers.

Lucretia. Fear not, Child,
He speaks too frankly.

35

Beatrice. Ah! My blood runs cold.
I fear that wicked laughter round his eye,
Which wrinkles up the skin even to the hair.

Cenci. Here are the letters brought from Salamanca;
Beatrice, read them to your mother. God!
I thank thee! In one night didst thou perform,
By ways inscrutable, the thing I sought.

40

My disobedient and rebellious sons
Are dead!—Why, dead!—What means this change of cheer?
You hear me not, I tell you they are dead;
And they will need no food or raiment more:
The tapers that did light them the dark way
Are their last cost. The Pope, I think, will not
Expect I should maintain them in their coffins.
Rejoice with me—my heart is wondrous glad.

45

50

[LUCRETIA sinks, half fainting; BEATRICE supports her.]

Beatrice. It is not true!—Dear lady, pray look up.
Had it been true, there is a God in Heaven,
He would not live to boast of such a boon.
Unnatural man, thou knowest that it is false.

Cenci. Ay, as the word of God; whom here I call
To witness that I speak the sober truth;—
And whose most favouring Providence was shown
Even in the manner of their deaths. For Rocco
Was kneeling at the mass, with sixteen others,
When the church fell and crushed him to a mummy,
The rest escaped unhurt. Cristofano
Was stabbed in error by a jealous man,
Whilst she he loved was sleeping with his rival;
All in the self-same hour of the same night;

55

60

Which shows that Heaven has special care of me.
 I beg those friends who love me, that they mark
 The day a feast upon their calendars.
 It was the twenty-seventh of December:
 Ay, read the letters if you doubt my oath.

65

[The Assembly appears confused; several of the guests rise.]

First Guest. Oh, horrible! I will depart—

Second Guest.

And I.—

Third Guest.

No, stay! 70

I do believe it is some jest; though faith!
 'Tis mocking us somewhat too solemnly.
 I think his son has married the Infanta,
 Or found a mine of gold in El Dorado;
 'Tis but to season some such news; stay, stay!
 I see 'tis only raillery by his smile.

75

Cenci (filling a bowl of wine, and lifting it up). Oh, thou bright wine
 whose purple splendour leaps
 And bubbles gaily in this golden bowl
 Under the lamplight, as my spirits do,
 To hear the death of my accursèd sons!
 Could I believe thou wert their mingled blood,
 Then would I taste thee like a sacrament,
 And pledge with thee the mighty Devil in Hell,
 Who, if a father's curses, as men say,
 Climb with swift wings after their children's souls,
 And drag them from the very throne of Heaven,
 Now triumphs in my triumph!—But thou art
 Superfluous; I have drunken deep of joy,
 And I will taste no other wine to-night.
 Here, Andrea! Bear the bowl around.

80

85

A Guest (rising). Thou wretch!
 Will none among this noble company
 Check the abandoned villain?

90

Camillo. For God's sake
 Let me dismiss the guests! You are insane,
 Some ill will come of this.

Second Guest. Seize, silence him!

First Guest. I will!

Third Guest. And I!

Cenci (addressing those who rise with a threatening gesture).

Who moves? Who speaks?

(turning to the Company)

'tis nothing, 95

Enjoy yourselves.—Beware! For my revenge
 Is as the sealed commission of a king
 That kills, and none dare name the murderer.

[The Banquet is broken up; several of the Guests are departing.]

Beatrice. I do entreat you, go not, noble guests;
 What, although tyranny and impious hate
 Stand sheltered by a father's hoary hair?

100

What, if 'tis he who clothed us in these limbs
 Who tortures them, and triumphs? What, if we,
 The desolate and the dead, were his own flesh,
 His children and his wife, whom he is bound
 To love and shelter? Shall we therefore find
 No refuge in this merciless wide world?
 O think what deep wrongs must have blotted out
 First love, then reverence in a child's prone mind,
 Till it thus vanquish shame and fear! O think!
 I have borne much, and kissed the sacred hand
 Which crushed us to the earth, and thought its stroke
 Was perhaps some paternal chastisement!
 Have excused much, doubted; and when no doubt
 Remained, have sought by patience, love, and tears
 To soften him, and when this could not be
 I have knelt down through the long sleepless nights
 And lifted up to God, the Father of all,
 Passionate prayers: and when these were not heard
 I have still borne,—until I meet you here,
 Princes and kinsmen, at this hideous feast
 Given at my brothers' deaths. Two yet remain,
 His wife remains and I, whom if ye save not,
 Ye may soon share such merriment again
 As fathers make over their children's graves.
 O Prince Colonna, thou art our near kinsman,
 Cardinal, thou art the Pope's chamberlain,
 Camillo, thou art chief justiciary,
 Take us away!

Cenci. (*He has been conversing with CAMILLO during the first part of BEATRICE'S speech; he hears the conclusion, and now advances.*)

I hope my good friends here
 Will think of their own daughters—or perhaps
 Of their own throats—before they lend an ear
 To this wild girl.

Beatrice (*not noticing the words of Cenci*). Dare no one look on me
 None answer? Can one tyrant overbear
 The sense of many best and wisest men?
 Or is it that I sue not in some form
 Of scrupulous law, that ye deny my suit?
 O God! That I were buried with my brothers!
 And that the flowers of this departed spring
 Were fading on my grave! And that my father
 Were celebrating now one feast for all!

Camillo. A bitter wish for one so young and gentle;
 Can we do nothing?

Colonna. Nothing that I see.
 Count Cenci were a dangerous enemy:
 Yet I would second any one.

A Cardinal. And I.

Cenci. Retire to your chamber, insolent girl!

145

Beatrice. Retire thou, impious man! Ay, hide thyself
Where never eye can look upon thee more!

Wouldst thou have honour and obedience

Who art a torturer? Father, never dream

Though thou mayst overbear this company,

150

But ill must come of ill.—Frown not on me!

Haste, hide thyself, lest with avenging looks

My brothers' ghosts should hunt thee from thy seat!

Cover thy face from every living eye,

And start if thou but hear a human step:

155

Seek out some dark and silent corner, there,

Bow thy white head before offended God,

And we will kneel around, and fervently

Pray that he pity both ourselves and thee.

Cenci. My friends, I do lament this insane girl

160

Has spoilt the mirth of our festivity.

Good night, farewell; I will not make you longer

Spectators of our dull domestic quarrels.

Another time.—

[*Exeunt all but CENCI and BEATRICE.*]

My brain is swimming round;

Give me a bowl of wine!

[*To BEATRICE.*]

Thou painted viper!

165

Beast that thou art! Fair and yet terrible!

I know a charm shall make thee meek and tame,

Now get thee from my sight!

[*Exit BEATRICE.*]

Here, Andrea,

Fill up this goblet with Greek wine. I said

I would not drink this evening; but I must;

170

For, strange to say, I feel my spirits fail

With thinking what I have decreed to do.—

[*Drinking the wine.*]

Be thou the resolution of quick youth

Within my veins, and manhood's purpose stern,

And age's firm, cold, subtle villainy;

175

As if thou wert indeed my children's blood

Which I did thirst to drink! The charm works well;

It must be done; it shall be done, I swear!

[*Exit.*]

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in the Cenci Palace. Enter LUCRETIA and BERNARDO.*

Lucretia. Weep not, my gentle boy; he struck but me

Who have borne deeper wrongs. In truth, if he

Had killed me, he had done a kinder deed.

O God, Almighty, do Thou look upon us,

We have no other friend but only Thee!

Yet weep not; though I love you as my own,
I am not your true mother.

Bernardo. O more, more,
Than ever mother was to any child,
That have you been to me! Had he not been
My father, do you think that I should weep!

Lucretia. Alas! Poor boy, what else couldst thou have done?

Enter BEATRICE.

Beatrice (in a hurried voice). Did he pass this way? Have you seen
him, brother?

Ah, no! that is his step upon the stairs;

'Tis nearer now; his hand is on the door;

Mother, if I to thee have ever been

A duteous child, now save me! Thou, great God,

Whose image upon earth a father is,

Dost Thou indeed abandon me? He comes;

The door is opening now; I see his face;

He frowns on others, but he smiles on me,

Even as he did after the feast last night.

Enter a Servant.

Almighty God, how merciful Thou art!

'Tis but Orsino's servant.—Well, what news?

Servant. My master bids me say, the Holy Father

Has sent back your petition thus unopened.

And he demands at what hour 'twere secure

To visit you again?

[Giving a paper.

26

Lucretia.

At the Ave Mary.

[Exit Servant.

So, daughter, our last hope has failed; Ah me!

How pale you look; you tremble, and you stand

Wrapped in some fixed and fearful meditation,

As if one thought were over strong for you:

Your eyes have a chill glare; O, dearest child!

Are you gone mad? If not, pray speak to me.

Beatrice. You see I am not mad: I speak to you.

Lucretia. You talked of something that your father did

After that dreadful feast? Could it be worse

Than when he smiled, and cried, 'My sons are dead!'

And every one looked in his neighbour's face

To see if others were as white as he?

At the first word he spoke I felt the blood

Rush to my heart, and fell into a trance;

And when it passed I sat all weak and wild;

Whilst you alone stood up, and with strong words

Checked his unnatural pride; and I could see

The devil was rebuked that lives in him.

Until this hour thus have you ever stood

Between us and your father's moody wrath

Like a protecting presence: your firm mind

Has been our only refuge and defence:

30

40

45

What can have thus subdued it? What can now
Have given you that cold melancholy look,
Succeeding to your unaccustomed fear? 50

Beatrice. What is it that you say? I was just thinking
'Twere better not to struggle any more.
Men, like my father, have been dark and bloody, 55
Yet never—Oh! Before worse comes of it
'Twere wise to die: it ends in that at last.

Lucretia. Oh, talk not so, dear child! Tell me at once
What did your father do or say to you?
He stayed not after that accursed feast 60
One moment in your chamber.—Speak to me.

Bernardo. Oh, sister, sister, prithee, speak to us!

Beatrice (*speaking very slowly with a forced calmness*). It was one word,
Mother, one little word;

One look, one smile. (*Wildly.*) Oh! He has trampled me
Under his feet, and made the blood stream down 65
My pallid cheeks. And he has given us all
Ditch-water, and the fever-stricken flesh
Of buffaloes, and bade us eat or starve,
And we have eaten.—He has made me look
On my beloved Bernardo, when the rust 70
Of heavy chains has gangrened his sweet limbs,
And I have never yet despaired—but now!
What could I say?

[*Recovering herself.*]

Ah, no! 'tis nothing new.
The sufferings we all share have made me wild:
He only struck and cursed me as he passed; 75
He said, he looked, he did;—nothing at all
Beyond his wont, yet it disordered me.

Alas! I am forgetful of my duty,
I should preserve my senses for your sake.

Lucretia. Nay, Beatrice; have courage, my sweet girl, 80
If any one despairs it should be I
Who loved him once, and now must live with him
Till God in pity call for him or me.

For you may, like your sister, find some husband,
And smile, years hence, with children round your knees; 85
Whilst I, then dead, and all this hideous coil
Shall be remembered only as a dream.

Beatrice. Talk not to me, dear lady, of a husband.
Did you not nurse me when my mother died?
Did you not shield me and that dearest boy? 90
And had we any other friend but you
In infancy, with gentle words and looks,
To win our father not to murder us?
And shall I now desert you? May the ghost
Of my dead Mother plead against my soul 95
If I abandon her who filled the place
She left, with more, even, than a mother's love!

Bernardo. And I am of my sister's mind. Indeed
I would not leave you in this wretchedness,
Even though the Pope should make me free to live
In some blithe place, like others of my age,
With sports, and delicate food, and the fresh air.
Oh, never think that I will leave you, Mother!

Lucretia. My dear, dear children!

Enter CENCI, suddenly.

Cenci. What, Beatrice here!
Come hither! [*She shrinks back, and covers her face.*]

Nay, hide not your face, 'tis fair;
Look up! Why, yesternight you dared to look
With disobedient insolence upon me,
Bending a stern and an inquiring brow
On what I meant; whilst I then sought to hide
That which I came to tell you—but in vain.

Beatrice (wildly, staggering towards the door). O that the earth would
gape! Hide me, O God!

Cenci. Then it was I whose inarticulate words
Fell from my lips, and who with tottering steps
Fled from your presence, as you now from mine.
Stay, I command you—from this day and hour
Never again, I think, with fearless eye,
And brow superior, and unaltered cheek,
And that lip made for tenderness or scorn,
Shalt thou strike dumb the meanest of mankind;
Me least of all. Now get thee to thy chamber!
Thou too, loathed image of thy cursèd mother, [*To BERNARDO.*]
Thy milky, meek face makes me sick with hate!

[*Exeunt BEATRICE and BERNARDO.*]

(*Aside.*) So much has passed between us as must make
Me bold, her fearful.—'Tis an awful thing
To touch such mischief as I now conceive:
So men sit shivering on the dewy bank,
And try the chill stream with their feet; once in . . .
How the delighted spirit pants for joy!

Lucretia (advancing timidly towards him). O husband! Pray forgive
poor Beatrice.
She meant not any ill.

Cenci. Nor you perhaps?
Nor that young imp, whom you have taught by rote
Parricide with his alphabet? Nor Giacomo?
Nor those two most unnatural sons, who stirred
Enmity up against me with the Pope?
Whom in one night merciful God cut off:
Innocent lambs! They thought not any ill.
You were not here conspiring? You said nothing
Of how I might be dungeoned as a madman;
Or be condemned to death for some offence,

And you would be the witnesses?—This failing,
 How just it were to hire assassins, or
 Put sudden poison in my evening drink?
 Or smother me when overcome by wine?
 Seeing we had no other judge but God,
 And He had sentenced me, and there were none
 But you to be the executioners
 Of His decree enregistered in Heaven?
 Oh, no! You said not this?

Lucretia. So help me God,
 I never thought the things you charge me with!
Cenci. If you dare speak that wicked lie again
 I'll kill you. What! It was not by your counsel
 That Beatrice disturbed the feast last night?
 You did not hope to stir some enemies
 Against me, and escape, and laugh to scorn
 What every nerve of you now trembles at?
 You judged that men were bolder than they are;
 Few dare to stand between their grave and me.

Lucretia. Look not so dreadfully! By my salvation
 I knew not aught that Beatrice designed;
 Nor do I think she designed any thing
 Until she heard you talk of her dead brothers.

Cenci. Blaspheming liar! You are damned for this!
 But I will take you where you may persuade
 The stones you tread on to deliver you:
 For men shall there be none but those who dare
 All things—not question that which I command.
 On Wednesday next I shall set out: you know
 That savage rock, the Castle of Petrella:
 'Tis safely walled, and moated round about:
 Its dungeons underground, and its thick towers
 Never told tales; though they have heard and seen
 What might make dumb things speak.—Why do you linger?
 Make speediest preparation for the journey! [*Exit LUCRETIA.*]

The all-beholding sun yet shines; I hear
 A busy stir of men about the streets;
 I see the bright sky through the window panes:
 It is a garish, broad, and peering day;
 Loud, light, suspicious, full of eyes and ears,
 And every little corner, nook, and hole
 Is penetrated with the insolent light.
 Come darkness! Yet, what is the day to me?
 And wherefore should I wish for night, who do
 A deed which shall confound both night and day?
 'Tis she shall grope through a bewildering mist
 Of horror: if there be a sun in heaven
 She shall not dare to look upon its beams;
 Nor feel its warmth. Let her then wish for night;
 The act I think shall soon extinguish all

For me: I bear a darker deadlier gloom
 Than the earth's shade, or interlunar air,
 Or constellations quenched in murkiest cloud,
 In which I walk secure and unbeheld
 Towards my purpose.—Would that it were done! [Exit.

SCENE II.—*A Chamber in the Vatican. Enter CAMILLO and GIACOMO, in conversation.*

Camillo. There is an obsolete and doubtful law
 By which you might obtain a bare provision
 Of food and clothing—

Giacomo. Nothing more? Alas!
 Bare must be the provision which strict law
 Awards, and aged, sullen avarice pays. 5
 Why did my father not apprentice me
 To some mechanic trade? I should have then
 Been trained in no highborn necessities
 Which I could meet not by my daily toil.
 The eldest son of a rich nobleman 10
 Is heir to all his incapacities;
 He has wide wants, and narrow powers. If you,
 Cardinal Camillo, were reduced at once
 From thrice-driven beds of down, and delicate food,
 An hundred servants, and six palaces, 15
 To that which nature doth indeed require?—

Camillo. Nay, there is reason in your plea; 'twere hard.

Giacomo. 'Tis hard for a firm man to bear: but I
 Have a dear wife, a lady of high birth,
 Whose dowry in ill hour I lent my father 20
 Without a bond or witness to the deed:
 And children, who inherit her fine senses,
 The fairest creatures in this breathing world;
 And she and they reproach me not. Cardinal,
 Do you not think the Pope would interpose 25
 And stretch authority beyond the law?

Camillo. Though your peculiar case is hard, I know
 The Pope will not divert the course of law.
 After that impious feast the other night
 I spoke with him, and urged him then to check 30
 Your father's cruel hand; he frowned and said,
 'Children are disobedient, and they sting
 Their fathers' hearts to madness and despair,
 Requiring years of care with contumely.
 I pity the Count Cenci from my heart; 35
 His outraged love perhaps awakened hate,
 And thus he is exasperated to ill.
 In the great war between the old and young
 I, who have white hairs and a tottering body,
 Will keep at least blameless neutrality.' 40

Enter ORSINO.

You, my good Lord Orsino, heard those words.

Orsino. What words?

Giacomo. Alas, repeat them not again!

There then is no redress for me, at least
None but that which I may achieve myself,
Since I am driven to the brink.—But, say, 45
My innocent sister and my only brother
Are dying underneath my father's eye.
The memorable torturers of this land,
Galeaz Visconti, Borgia, Ezzelin,
Never inflicted on the meanest slave 50
What these endure; shall they have no protection?

Camillo. Why, if they would petition to the Pope
I see not how he could refuse it—yet
He holds it of most dangerous example
In aught to weaken the paternal power, 55
Being, as 'twere, the shadow of his own.
I pray you now excuse me. I have business
That will not bear delay. [Exit CAMILLO.]

Giacomo. But you, Orsino,
Have the petition: wherefore not present it?

Orsino. I have presented it, and backed it with 60
My earnest prayers, and urgent interest;
It was returned unanswered. I doubt not
But that the strange and execrable deeds
Alleged in it—in truth they might well baffle
Any belief—have turned the Pope's displeasure 65
Upon the accusers from the criminal:
So I should guess from what Camillo said.

Giacomo. My friend, that palace-walking devil Gold
Has whispered silence to his Holiness:
And we are left, as scorpions ringed with fire. 70
What should we do but strike ourselves to death?
For he who is our murderous persecutor
Is shielded by a father's holy name,
Or I would— [Stops abruptly.]

Orsino. What? Fear not to speak your thought. 75
Words are but holy as the deeds they cover:
A priest who has forsworn the God he serves;
A judge who makes Truth weep at his decree;
A friend who should weave counsel, as I now,
But as the mantle of some selfish guile;
A father who is all a tyrant seems, 80
Were the profaner for his sacred name.

Giacomo. Ask me not what I think; the unwilling brain
Feigns often what it would not; and we trust
Imagination with such phantasies

77 makes Truth *ed.* 1821; makes the truth *edd.* 1819, 1839.

As the tongue dares not fashion into words,
Which have no words, their horror makes them dim
To the mind's eye.—My heart denies itself
To think what you demand.

85

Orsino. But a friend's bosom
Is as the inmost cave of our own mind
Where we sit shut from the wide gaze of day,
And from the all-communicating air.
You look what I suspected—

90

Giacomo. Spare me now!
I am as one lost in a midnight wood,
Who dares not ask some harmless passenger
The path across the wilderness, lest he,
As my thoughts are, should be—a murderer.
I know you are my friend, and all I dare
Speak to my soul that will I trust with thee.
But now my heart is heavy, and would take
Lone counsel from a night of sleepless care.
Pardon me, that I say farewell—farewell!
I would that to my own suspected self
I could address a word so full of peace.

95

100

Orsino. Farewell!—Be your thoughts better or more bold.

[*Exit* GIACOMO.]

105

I had disposed the Cardinal Camillo
To feed his hope with cold encouragement:
It fortunately serves my close designs
That 'tis a trick of this same family
To analyse their own and other minds.
Such self-anatomy shall teach the will
Dangerous secrets: for it tempts our powers,
Knowing what must be thought, and may be done,
Into the depth of darkest purposes:
So Cenci fell into the pit; even I,
Since Beatrice unveiled me to myself,
And made me shrink from what I cannot shun,
Show a poor figure to my own esteem,
To which I grow half reconciled. I'll do
As little mischief as I can; that thought
Shall fee the accuser conscience.

110

115

(*After a pause.*) Now what harm
If Cenci should be murdered?—Yet, if murdered,
Wherefore by me? And what if I could take
The profit, yet omit the sin and peril
In such an action? Of all earthly things
I fear a man whose blows outspeed his words;
And such is Cenci: and while Cenci lives
His daughter's dowry were a secret grave
If a priest wins her.—Oh, fair Beatrice!
Would that I loved thee not, or loving thee
Could but despise danger and gold and all

120

125

130

That frowns between my wish and its effect,
 Or smiles beyond it! There is no escape . . .
 Her bright form kneels beside me at the altar,
 And follows me to the resort of men,
 And fills my slumber with tumultuous dreams, 135
 So when I wake my blood seems liquid fire;
 And if I strike my damp and dizzy head
 My hot palm scorches it: her very name,
 But spoken by a stranger, makes my heart
 Sicken and pant; and thus unprofitably 140
 I clasp the phantom of unfelt delights
 Till weak imagination half possesses
 The self-created shadow. Yet much longer
 Will I not nurse this life of feverous hours:
 From the unravelled hopes of Giacomo 145
 I must work out my own dear purposes.
 I see, as from a tower, the end of all:
 Her father dead; her brother bound to me
 By a dark secret, surer than the grave;
 Her mother scared and unexpostulating 150
 From the dread manner of her wish achieved:
 And she!—Once more take courage, my faint heart;
 What dares a friendless maiden matched with thee?
 I have such foresight as assures success:
 Some unbeheld divinity doth ever, 155
 When dread events are near, stir up men's minds
 To black suggestions; and he prospers best,
 Not who becomes the instrument of ill,
 But who can flatter the dark spirit, that makes
 Its empire and its prey of other hearts
 Till it become his slave . . . as I will do. 160

[Exit.]

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in the Cenci Palace.* LUCRETIA, to her enter
 BEATRICE.

Beatrice. (She enters staggering, and speaks wildly.) Reach me that
 handkerchief!—My brain is hurt;
 My eyes are full of blood; just wipe them for me . . .
 I see but indistinctly . . .

Lucretia. My sweet child,
 You have no wound; 'tis only a cold dew
 That starts from your dear brow . . . Alas! Alas!
 What has befallen? 5

Beatrice. How comes this hair undone?
 Its wandering strings must be what blind me so,
 And yet I tied it fast.—O, horrible!
 The pavement sinks under my feet! The walls

Spin round! I see a woman weeping there,
And standing calm and motionless, whilst I
Slide giddily as the world reels. . . . My God!

10

The beautiful blue heaven is flecked with blood!
The sunshine on the floor is black! The air
Is changed to vapours such as the dead breathe
In charnel pits! Pah! I am choked! There creeps

15

A clinging, black, contaminating mist
About me . . . 'tis substantial, heavy, thick,
I cannot pluck it from me, for it glues
My fingers and my limbs to one another,

20

And eats into my sinews, and dissolves
My flesh to a pollution, poisoning
The subtle, pure, and inmost spirit of life!

My God! I never knew what the mad felt
Before; for I am mad beyond all doubt!

25

(*More wildly.*) No, I am dead! These putrefying limbs
Shut round and sepulchre the panting soul
Which would burst forth into the wandering air! (*A pause.*)

What hideous thought was that I had even now?
'Tis gone; and yet its burthen remains here
O'er these dull eyes . . . upon this weary heart!

30

O, world! O, life! O, day! O, misery!
Lucretia. What ails thee, my poor child? She answers not:
Her spirit apprehends the sense of pain,

But not its cause; suffering has dried away
The source from which it sprung . . .

35

Beatrice (*frantically*). Like Parricide . . .
Misery has killed its father: yet its father
Never like mine . . . O, God! What thing am I?

Lucretia. My dearest child, what has your father done?
Beatrice (*doubtfully*). Who art thou, questioner? I have no father. 40
(*Aside.*) She is the madhouse nurse who tends on me,
It is a piteous office.

40

[*To LUCRETIA, in a slow, subdued voice.*
Do you know
I thought I was that wretched Beatrice
Men speak of, whom her father sometimes hales

45

From hall to hall by the entangled hair;
At others, pens up naked in damp cells
Where scaly reptiles crawl, and starves her there,
Till she will eat strange flesh. This woful story

So did I overact in my sick dreams,
That I imagined . . . no, it cannot be!
Horrible things have been in this wide world,

50

Prodigious mixtures, and confusions strange
Of good and ill; and worse have been conceived
Than ever there was found a heart to do.
But never fancy imaged such a deed

55

As . . . [*Pauses, suddenly recollecting herself.*

Who art thou? Swear to me, ere I die

With fearful expectation, that indeed
Thou art not what thou seemest . . . Mother!

Lucretia.

Oh!

My sweet child, know you . . .

Beatrice.

Yet speak it not:

For then if this be truth, that other too

60

Must be a truth, a firm enduring truth,

Linked with each lasting circumstance of life,

Never to change, never to pass away.

Why so it is. This is the Cenci Palace;

Thou art Lucretia; I am Beatrice.

65

I have talked some wild words, but will no more.

Mother, come near me: from this point of time,

I am . . .

[*Her voice dies away faintly.*]

Lucretia. Alas! What has befallen thee, child?

What has thy father done?

Beatrice.

What have I done?

Am I not innocent? Is it my crime

70

That one with white hair, and imperious brow,

Who tortured me from my forgotten years,

As parents only dare, should call himself

My father, yet should be!—Oh, what am I?

What name, what place, what memory shall be mine?

75

What retrospects, outliving even despair?

Lucretia. He is a violent tyrant, surely, child:

We know that death alone can make us free;

His death or ours. But what can he have done

Of deadlier outrage or worse injury?

80

Thou art unlike thyself; thine eyes shoot forth

A wandering and strange spirit. Speak to me,

Unlock those pallid hands whose fingers twine

With one another.

Beatrice.

'Tis the restless life

Tortured within them. If I try to speak

85

I shall go mad. Ay, something must be done;

What, yet I know not . . . something which shall make

The thing that I have suffered but a shadow

In the dread lightning which avenges it;

Brief, rapid, irreversible, destroying

90

The consequence of what it cannot cure.

Some such thing is to be endured or done:

When I know what, I shall be still and calm,

And never anything will move me more.

But now!—O blood, which art my father's blood,

95

Circling through these contaminated veins,

If thou, poured forth on the polluted earth,

Could wash away the crime, and punishment

By which I suffer . . . no, that cannot be!

Many might doubt there were a God above

100

Who sees and permits evil, and so die:

That faith no agony shall obscure in me.

Lucretia. It must indeed have been some bitter wrong;
Yet what, I dare not guess. Oh, my lost child,
Hide not in proud impenetrable grief
Thy sufferings from my fear. 105

Beatrice. I hide them not.
What are the words which you would have me speak?
I, who can feign no image in my mind
Of that which has transformed me: I, whose thought
Is like a ghost shrouded and folded up 110
In its own formless horror: of all words,
That minister to mortal intercourse,
Which wouldst thou hear? For there is none to tell
My misery: if another ever knew
Aught like to it, she died as I will die,
And left it, as I must, without a name. 115
Death! Death! Our law and our religion call thee
A punishment and a reward . . . Oh, which
Have I deserved?

Lucretia. The peace of innocence;
Till in your season you be called to heaven. 120
Whate'er you may have suffered, you have done
No evil. Death must be the punishment
Of crime, or the reward of trampling down
The thorns which God has strewed upon the path
Which leads to immortality.

Beatrice. Ay, death . . . 125
The punishment of crime. I pray thee, God,
Let me not be bewildered while I judge.
If I must live day after day, and keep
These limbs, the unworthy temple of Thy spirit,
As a foul den from which what Thou abhorrest 130
May mock Thee, unavenged . . . it shall not be!
Self-murder . . . no, that might be no escape,
For Thy decree yawns like a Hell between
Our will and it:—O! In this mortal world
There is no vindication and no law 135
Which can adjudge and execute the doom
Of that through which I suffer.

Enter ORSINO.

(*She approaches him solemnly.*) Welcome, Friend!
I have to tell you that, since last we met,
I have endured a wrong so great and strange,
That neither life nor death can give me rest. 140
Ask me not what it is, for there are deeds
Which have no form, sufferings which have no tongue.

Orsino. And what is he who has thus injured you?

Beatrice. The man they call my father: a dread name.

Orsino. It cannot be . . .

Beatrice. What it can be, or not,
Forbear to think. It is, and it has been;
Advise me how it shall not be again.

I thought to die; but a religious awe
Restrains me, and the dread lest death itself
Might be no refuge from the consciousness
Of what is yet unexpiated. Oh, speak! 150

Orsino. Accuse him of the deed, and let the law
Avenge thee.

Beatrice. Oh, ice-hearted counsellor!
If I could find a word that might make known
The crime of my destroyer; and that done,
My tongue should like a knife tear out the secret 155
Which cankers my heart's core; ay, lay all bare
So that my unpolluted fame should be
With vilest gossips a stale mouthèd story;
A mock, a byword, an astonishment:— 160
If this were done, which never shall be done,
Think of the offender's gold, his dreaded hate,
And the strange horror of the accuser's tale,
Baffling belief, and overpowering speech;
Scarce whispered, unimaginable, wrapped 165
In hideous hints . . . Oh, most assured redress!

Orsino. You will endure it then?

Beatrice. Endure?—Orsino,
It seems your counsel is small profit.
[Turns from him, and speaks half to herself.
Ay,

All must be suddenly resolved and done.
What is this undistinguishable mist 170
Of thoughts, which rise, like shadow after shadow,
Darkening each other?

Orsino. Should the offender live?
Triumph in his misdeed? and make, by use,
His crime, whate'er it is, dreadful no doubt,
Thine element; until thou mayst become 175
Utterly lost; subdued even to the hue
Of that which thou permittest?

Beatrice (to herself). Mighty death!
Thou double-visaged shadow? Only judge!
Rightfullest arbiter! [She retires absorbed in thought.

Lucretia. If the lightning
Of God has e'er descended to avenge . . . 180

Orsino. Blaspheme not! His high Providence commits
Its glory on this earth, and their own wrongs
Into the hands of men; if they neglect
To punish crime . . .

Lucretia. But if one, like this wretch,
Should mock, with gold, opinion, law, and power? 185

If there be no appeal to that which makes
 The guiltiest tremble? If because our wrongs,
 For that they are unnatural, strange, and monstrous,
 Exceed all measure of belief? O God!
 If, for the very reasons which should make
 Redress most swift and sure, our injurer triumphs?
 And we, the victims, bear worse punishment
 Than that appointed for their torturer?

190

Orsino. Think not
 But that there is redress where there is wrong,
 So we be bold enough to seize it.

Lucretia. How?
 If there were any way to make all sure,
 I know not . . . but I think it might be good
 To . . .

195

Orsino. Why, his late outrage to Beatrice;
 For it is such, as I but faintly guess,
 As makes remorse dishonour, and leaves her
 Only one duty, how she may avenge:
 You, but one refuge from ills ill endured;
 Me, but one counsel . . .

200

Lucretia. For we cannot hope
 That aid, or retribution, or resource
 Will arise thence, where every other one
 Might find them with less need.

205

[BEATRICE advances.]

Orsino. Then . . .

Beatrice. Peace, Orsino!

And, honoured Lady, while I speak, I pray,
 That you put off, as garments overworn,
 Forbearance and respect, remorse and fear,
 And all the fit restraints of daily life,
 Which have been borne from childhood, but which now
 Would be a mockery to my holier plea.
 As I have said, I have endured a wrong,
 Which, though it be expressionless, is such
 As asks atonement; both for what is past,
 And lest I be reserved, day after day,
 To load with crimes an overburthened soul,
 And be . . . what ye can dream not. I have prayed
 To God, and I have talked with my own heart,
 And have unravelled my entangled will,
 And have at length determined what is right.
 Art thou my friend, Orsino? False or true?
 Pledge thy salvation ere I speak.

210

215

220

Orsino. I swear
 To dedicate my cunning, and my strength,
 My silence, and whatever else is mine,
 To thy commands.

225

Lucretia. You think we should devise
 His death?

Beatrice. And execute what is devised,
And suddenly. We must be brief and bold.

Orsino. And yet most cautious.

Lucretia. For the jealous laws
Would punish us with death and infamy 230
For that which it became themselves to do.

Beatrice. Be cautious as ye may, but prompt. Orsino,
What are the means?

Orsino. I know two dull, fierce outlaws,
Who think man's spirit as a worm's, and they 235
Would trample out, for any slight caprice,
The meanest or the noblest life. This mood
Is marketable here in Rome. They sell
What we now want.

Lucretia. To-morrow before dawn,
Cenci will take us to that lonely rock,
Petrella, in the Apulian Apennines. 240
If he arrive there . . .

Beatrice. He must not arrive.

Orsino. Will it be dark before you reach the tower?

Lucretia. The sun will scarce be set.

Beatrice. But I remember
Two miles on this side of the fort, the road
Crosses a deep ravine; 'tis rough and narrow, 245
And winds with short turns down the precipice;
And in its depth there is a mighty rock,
Which has, from unimaginable years,
Sustained itself with terror and with toil
Over a gulf, and with the agony 250
With which it clings seems slowly coming down;
Even as a wretched soul hour after hour,
Clings to the mass of life; yet clinging, leans;
And leaning, makes more dark the dread abyss
In which it fears to fall: beneath this crag 255
Huge as despair, as if in weariness,
The melancholy mountain yawns . . . below,
You hear but see not an impetuous torrent
Raging among the caverns, and a bridge
Crosses the chasm; and high above there grow, 260
With intersecting trunks, from crag to crag,
Cedars, and yews, and pines; whose tangled hair
Is matted in one solid roof of shade
By the dark ivy's twine. At noonday here
'Tis twilight, and at sunset blackest night. 265

Orsino. Before you reach that bridge make some excuse
For spurring on your mules, or loitering
Until . . .

Beatrice. What sound is that?

Lucretia. Hark! No, it cannot be a servant's step
It must be Cenci, unexpectedly 270

Returned . . . Make some excuse for being here.

Beatrice. (*To ORSINO, as she goes out.*) That step we hear approach
must never pass

The bridge of which we spoke. [*Exeunt LUCRETIA and BEATRICE.*]

Orsino. What shall I do?

Cenci must find me here, and I must bear

The imperious inquisition of his looks 275

As to what brought me hither; let me mask

Mine own in some inane and vacant smile.

Enter GIACOMO, in a hurried manner.

How! Have you ventured hither? Know you then

That Cenci is from home?

Giacomo. I sought him here;

And now must wait till he returns.

Orsino. Great God! 280

Weigh you the danger of this rashness?

Giacomo. Ay!

Does my destroyer know his danger? We

Are now no more, as once, parent and child,

But man to man; the oppressor to the oppressed;

The slanderer to the slandered; foe to foe: 285

He has cast Nature off, which was his shield,

And Nature casts him off, who is her shame;

And I spurn both. Is it a father's throat

Which I will shake, and say, I ask not gold;

I ask not happy years; nor memories 290

Of tranquil childhood; nor home-sheltered love;

Though all these hast thou torn from me, and more;

But only my fair fame; only one hoard

Of peace, which I thought hidden from thy hate,

Under the penury heaped on me by thee, 295

Or I will . . . God can understand and pardon,

Why should I speak with man?

Orsino. Be calm, dear friend.

Giacomo. Well, I will calmly tell you what he did.

This old Francesco Cenci, as you know,

Borrowed the dowry of my wife from me, 300

And then denied the loan; and left me so

In poverty, the which I sought to mend

By holding a poor office in the state.

It had been promised to me, and already

I bought new clothing for my raggèd babes, 305

And my wife smiled; and my heart knew repose.

When Cenci's intercession, as I found,

Conferred this office on a wretch, whom thus

He paid for vilest service. I returned

With this ill news, and we sate sad together 310

Solacing our despondency with tears

Of such affection and unbroken faith
 As temper life's worst bitterness ; when he,
 As he is wont, came to upbraid and curse,
 Mocking our poverty, and telling us 315
 Such was God's scourge for disobedient sons.
 And then, that I might strike him dumb with shame,
 I spoke of my wife's dowry ; but he coined
 A brief yet specious tale, how I had wasted
 The sum in secret riot ; and he saw 320
 My wife was touched, and he went smiling forth.
 And when I knew the impression he had made,
 And felt my wife insult with silent scorn
 My ardent truth, and look averse and cold,
 I went forth too : but soon returned again ; 325
 Yet not so soon but that my wife had taught
 My children her harsh thoughts, and they all cried,
 'Give us clothes, father ! Give us better food !
 What you in one night squander were enough
 For months !' I looked, and saw that home was hell. 330
 And to that hell will I return no more
 Until mine enemy has rendered up
 Atonement, or, as he gave life to me
 I will, reversing Nature's law . . .

Orsino. Trust me,
 The compensation which thou seekest here 335
 Will be denied.

Giacomo. Then . . . Are you not my friend ?
 Did you not hint at the alternative,
 Upon the brink of which you see I stand,
 The other day when we conversed together ?
 My wrongs were then less. That word parricide, 340
 Although I am resolved, haunts me like fear.

Orsino. It must be fear itself, for the bare word
 Is hollow mockery. Mark, how wisest God
 Draws to one point the threads of a just doom,
 So sanctifying it : what you devise 345
 Is, as it were, accomplished.

Giacomo. Is he dead ?

Orsino. His grave is ready. Know that since we met
 Cenci has done an outrage to his daughter.

Giacomo. What outrage ?

Orsino. That she speaks not, but you may
 Conceive such half conjectures as I do, 350
 From her fixed paleness, and the lofty grief
 Of her stern brow bent on the idle air,
 And her severe unmodulated voice,
 Drowning both tenderness and dread ; and last
 From this ; that whilst her step-mother and I,
 Bewildered in our horror, talked together 355
 With obscure hints ; both self-misunderstood

And darkly guessing, stumbling, in our talk,
 Over the truth, and yet to its revenge,
 She interrupted us, and with a look
 Which told before she spoke it, he must die: . . . 360

Giacomo. It is enough. My doubts are well appeased;
 There is a higher reason for the act
 Than mine; there is a holier judge than me,
 A more unblamed avenger. Beatrice, 365
 Who in the gentleness of thy sweet youth
 Hast never trodden on a worm, or bruised
 A living flower, but thou hast pitied it
 With needless tears! Fair sister, thou in whom
 Men wondered how such loveliness and wisdom 370
 Did not destroy each other! Is there made
 Ravage of thee? O, heart, I ask no more
 Justification! Shall I wait, Orsino,
 Till he return, and stab him at the door?

Orsino. Not so; some accident might interpose 375
 To rescue him from what is now most sure;
 And you are unprovided where to fly,
 How to excuse or to conceal. Nay, listen:
 All is contrived; success is so assured
 That . . .

Enter BEATRICE.

Beatrice. 'Tis my brother's voice! You know me not? 380

Giacomo. My sister, my lost sister!

Beatrice. Lost indeed!

I see Orsino has talked with you, and
 That you conjecture things too horrible
 To speak, yet far less than the truth. Now, stay not,
 He might return: yet kiss me; I shall know 385
 That then thou hast consented to his death.
 Farewell, farewell! Let piety to God,
 Brotherly love, justice and clemency,
 And all things that make tender hardest hearts
 Make thine hard, brother. Answer not . . . farewell. 390

[Exeunt severally.]

SCENE II.—*A mean Apartment in GIACOMO'S House. GIACOMO alone.*

Giacomo. 'Tis midnight, and Orsino comes not yet.

[Thunder, and the sound of a storm.]

What! can the everlasting elements
 Feel with a worm like man? If so, the shaft
 Of mercy-winged lightning would not fall
 On stones and trees. My wife and children sleep: 5
 They are now living in unmeaning dreams;
 But I must wake, still doubting if that deed
 Be just which is most necessary. O,
 Thou un replenished lamp! whose narrow fire
 Is shaken by the wind, and on whose edge 10

Devouring darkness hovers! Thou small flame,
Which, as a dying pulse rises and falls,
Still flickerest up and down, how very soon,
Did I not feed thee, wouldst thou fail and be
As thou hadst never been! So wastes and sinks
Even now, perhaps, the life that kindled mine:
But that no power can fill with vital oil
That broken lamp of flesh. Ha! 'tis the blood
Which fed these veins that ebbs till all is cold:
It is the form that moulded mine that sinks
Into the white and yellow spasms of death:
It is the soul by which mine was arrayed
In God's immortal likeness which now stands
Naked before Heaven's judgement seat!

15

20

[A bell strikes.

One! Two!

The hours crawl on; and when my hairs are white,
My son will then perhaps be waiting thus,
Tortured between just hate and vain remorse;
Chiding the tardy messenger of news
Like those which I expect. I almost wish
He be not dead, although my wrongs are great;
Yet . . . 'tis Orsino's step . . .

25

30

Enter ORSINO.

Speak!

I am come

Orsino.
To say he has escaped.

Giacomo. Escaped!

Orsino. And safe
Within Petrella. He passed by the spot
Appointed for the deed an hour too soon.

Giacomo. Are we the fools of such contingencies?
And do we waste in blind misgivings thus
The hours when we should act? Then wind and thunder,
Which seemed to howl his knell, is the loud laughter
With which Heaven mocks our weakness! I henceforth
Will ne'er repent of aught designed or done
But my repentance.

35

40

Orsino. See, the lamp is out.

Giacomo. If no remorse is ours when the dim air
Has drank this innocent flame, why should we quail
When Cenci's life, that light by which ill spirits
See the worst deeds they prompt, shall sink for ever?
No, I am hardened.

45

Orsino. Why, what need of this?
Who feared the pale intrusion of remorse
In a just deed? Although our first plan failed,
Doubt not but he will soon be laid to rest.
But light the lamp; let us not talk i' the dark.

50

Giacomo (lighting the lamp). And yet once quenched I cannot thus relume
My father's life: do you not think his ghost

Might plead that argument with God?

Orsino. Once gone

You cannot now recall your sister's peace;
Your own extinguished years of youth and hope;
Nor your wife's bitter words; nor all the taunts
Which, from the prosperous, weak misfortune takes;
Nor your dead mother; nor . . . 55

Giacomo. O, speak no more!
I am resolved, although this very hand
Must quench the life that animated it. 60

Orsino. There is no need of that. Listen: you know
Olimpio, the castellan of Petrella
In old Colonna's time; him whom your father
Degraded from his post? And Marzio,
That desperate wretch, whom he deprived last year
Of a reward of blood, well earned and due? 65

Giacomo. I know Olimpio; and they say he hated
Old Cenci so, that in his silent rage
His lips grew white only to see him pass.
Of Marzio I know nothing.

Orsino. Marzio's hate
Matches Olimpio's. I have sent these men,
But in your name, and as at your request,
To talk with Beatrice and Lucretia. 70

Giacomo. Only to talk?

Orsino. The moments which even now
Pass onward to to-morrow's midnight hour
May memorize their flight with death: ere then
They must have talked, and may perhaps have done,
And made an end . . . 75

Giacomo. Listen! What sound is that?

Orsino. The house-dog moans, and the beams crack: nought else.

Giacomo. It is my wife complaining in her sleep: 80
I doubt not she is saying bitter things
Of me; and all my children round her dreaming
That I deny them sustenance.

Orsino. Whilst he
Who truly took it from them, and who fills
Their hungry rest with bitterness, now sleeps
Lapped in bad pleasures, and triumphantly
Mocks thee in visions of successful hate
Too like the truth of day. 85

Giacomo. If e'er he wakes
Again, I will not trust to hireling hands . . .

Orsino. Why, that were well. I must be gone; good-night. 90
When next we meet—may all be done!

Giacomo. And all
Forgotten: Oh, that I had never been! [*Exeunt.*]

END OF THE THIRD ACT.

91 may all be done! GIACOMO: And all *ed.* 1821; GIACOMO: May all be done, and all *ed.* 1819.

ACT IV

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in the Castle of Petrella.**Enter CENCI.*

Cenci. She comes not ; yet I left her even now
 Vanquished and faint. She knows the penalty
 Of her delay : yet what if threats are vain ?
 Am I not now within Petrella's moat ?
 Or fear I still the eyes and ears of Rome ?
 Might I not drag her by the golden hair ?
 Stamp on her ? Keep her sleepless till her brain
 Be overworn ? Tame her with chains and famine ?
 Less would suffice. Yet so to leave undone
 What I most seek ! No, 'tis her stubborn will
 Which by its own consent shall stoop as low
 As that which drags it down.

5

10

Enter LUCRETIA.

Thou loathèd wretch !
 Hide thee from my abhorrence : fly, begone !
 Yet stay ! Bid Beatrice come hither.

Lucretia. Oh,
 Husband ! I pray for thine own wretched sake
 Heed what thou dost. A man who walks like thee
 Through crimes, and through the danger of his crimes,
 Each hour may stumble o'er a sudden grave.
 And thou art old ; thy hairs are hoary gray ;
 As thou wouldst save thyself from death and hell,
 Pity thy daughter ; give her to some friend
 In marriage : so that she may tempt thee not
 To hatred, or worse thoughts, if worse there be.

15

20

Cenci. What ! like her sister who has found a home
 To mock my hate from with prosperity ?
 Strange ruin shall destroy both her and thee
 And all that yet remain. My death may be
 Rapid, her destiny outspeeds it. Go,
 Bid her come hither, and before my mood
 Be changed, lest I should drag her by the hair.

25

30

Lucretia. She sent me to thee, husband. At thy presence
 She fell, as thou dost know, into a trance ;
 And in that trance she heard a voice which said,
 'Cenci must die ! Let him confess himself !
 Even now the accusing Angel waits to hear
 If God, to punish his enormous crimes,
 Harden his dying heart !'

35

Cenci. Why—such things are . . .
 No doubt divine revealings may be made.

'Tis plain I have been favoured from above,
 For when I cursed my sons they died.—Ay . . . so . . . 40
 As to the right or wrong, that's talk . . . repentance . . .
 Repentance is an easy moment's work
 And more depends on God than me. Well . . . well . . .
 I must give up the greater point, which was
 To poison and corrupt her soul.

[A pause; LUCRETIA approaches anxiously, and
 then shrinks back as he speaks.]

One, two; 45
 Ay . . . Rocco and Cristofano my curse
 Strangled: and Giacomo, I think, will find
 Life a worse Hell than that beyond the grave:
 Beatrice shall, if there be skill in hate,
 Die in despair, blaspheming: to Bernardo, 50
 He is so innocent, I will bequeath
 The memory of these deeds, and make his youth
 The sepulchre of hope, where evil thoughts
 Shall grow like weeds on a neglected tomb.
 When all is done, out in the wide Campagna, 55
 I will pile up my silver and my gold;
 My costly robes, paintings and tapestries;
 My parchments and all records of my wealth,
 And make a bonfire in my joy, and leave
 Of my possessions nothing but my name; 60
 Which shall be an inheritance to strip
 Its wearer bare as infamy. That done,
 My soul, which is a scourge, will I resign
 Into the hands of him who wielded it;
 Be it for its own punishment or theirs, 65
 He will not ask it of me till the lash
 Be broken in its last and deepest wound;
 Until its hate be all inflicted. Yet,
 Lest death outspeed my purpose, let me make
 Short work and sure . . .

[Going.]

Lucretia. (Stops him.) Oh, stay It was a feint:
 She had no vision, and she heard no voice.
 I said it but to awe thee.

Cenci. That is well.
 Vile palterer with the sacred truth of God,
 Be thy soul choked with that blaspheming lie!
 For Beatrice worse terrors are in store 75
 To bend her to my will.

Lucretia. Oh! to what will?
 What cruel sufferings more than she has known
 Canst thou inflict?

Cenci. Andrea! Go call my daughter,
 And if she comes not tell her that I come.
 What sufferings? I will drag her, step by step, 80
 Through infamies unheard of among men:

She shall stand shelterless in the broad noon
 Of public scorn, for acts blazoned abroad,
 One among which shall be . . . What? Canst thou guess?
 She shall become (for what she most abhors 85
 Shall have a fascination to entrap
 Her loathing will) to her own conscious self
 All she appears to others; and when dead,
 As she shall die unshrived and unforgiven,
 A rebel to her father and her God, 90
 Her corpse shall be abandoned to the hounds;
 Her name shall be the terror of the earth;
 Her spirit shall approach the throne of God
 Plague-spotted with my curses. I will make
 Body and soul a monstrous lump of ruin. 95

Enter ANDREA.

Andrea. The Lady Beatrice . . .

Cenci. Speak, pale slave! What
 Said she?

Andrea. My Lord, 'twas what she looked; she said:
 'Go tell my father that I see the gulf
 Of Hell between us two, which he may pass,
 I will not.'

[*Exit* ANDREA.

Cenci. Go thou quick, Lucretia, 100
 Tell her to come; yet let her understand
 Her coming is consent: and say, moreover,
 That if she come not I will curse her. [*Exit* LUCRETIA.

Ha!

With what but with a father's curse doth God
 Panic-strike armed victory, and make pale 105
 Cities in their prosperity? The world's Father
 Must grant a parent's prayer against his child,
 Be he who asks even what men call me.
 Will not the deaths of her rebellious brothers
 Awe her before I speak? For I on them 110
 Did imprecate quick ruin, and it came.

Enter LUCRETIA.

Well; what? Speak, wretch!

Lucretia. She said, 'I cannot come;
 Go tell my father that I see a torrent
 Of his own blood raging between us.'

Cenci (kneeling). God! 115
 Hear me! If this most specious mass of flesh,
 Which Thou hast made my daughter; this my blood,
 This particle of my divided being;
 Or rather, this my bane and my disease,
 Whose sight infects and poisons me; this devil
 Which sprung from me as from a hell, was meant 120

To aught good use ; if her bright loveliness
 Was kindled to illumine this dark world ;
 If nursed by Thy selectest dew of love
 Such virtues blossom in her as should make
 The peace of life, I pray Thee for my sake,
 As Thou the common God and Father art
 Of her, and me, and all ; reverse that doom!
 Earth, in the name of God, let her food be
 Poison, until she be encrusted round
 With leprous stains! Heaven, rain upon her head
 The blistering drops of the Maremma's dew,
 Till she be speckled like a toad ; parch up
 Those love-enkindled lips, warp those fine limbs
 To loathèd lameness! All-beholding sun,
 Strike in thine envy those life-darting eyes
 With thine own blinding beams!

Lucretia. Peace! Peace!
 For thine own sake unsay those dreadful words.
 When high God grants He punishes such prayers.
Cenci (leaping up, and throwing his right hand towards Heaven).
 He does His will, I mine! This in addition,
 That if she have a child . . .

Lucretia. Horrible thought!
Cenci. That if she ever have a child ; and thou,
 Quick Nature! I adjure thee by thy God,
 That thou be fruitful in her, and increase
 And multiply, fulfilling his command,
 And my deep imprecation! May it be
 A hideous likeness of herself, that as
 From a distorting mirror, she may see
 Her image mixed with what she most abhors,
 Smiling upon her from her nursing breast.
 And that the child may from its infancy
 Grow, day by day, more wicked and deformed,
 Turning her mother's love to misery:
 And that both she and it may live until
 It shall repay her care and pain with hate,
 Or what may else be more unnatural.
 So he may hunt her through the clamorous scoffs
 Of the loud world to a dishonoured grave.
 Shall I revoke this curse? Go, bid her come,
 Before my words are chronicled in Heaven.

[Exit LUCRETIA.]
 I do not feel as if I were a man,
 But like a fiend appointed to chastise
 The offences of some unremembered world.
 My blood is running up and down my veins ;
 A fearful pleasure makes it prick and tingle:
 I feel a giddy sickness of strange awe ;
 My heart is beating with an expectation
 Of horrid joy.

Enter LUCRETIA.

What? Speak!

Lucretia. She bids thee curse;
And if thy curses, as they cannot do,
Could kill her soul . . .

Cenci. She would not come. 'Tis well,
I can do both: first take what I demand, 170
And then extort concession. To thy chamber!
Fly ere I spurn thee: and beware this night
That thou cross not my footsteps. It were safer
To come between the tiger and his prey. [*Exit LUCRETIA.*
It must be late; mine eyes grow weary dim 175
With unaccustomed heaviness of sleep.
Conscience! Oh, thou most insolent of lies!
They say that sleep, that healing dew of Heaven,
Steeps not in balm the foldings of the brain
Which thinks thee an impostor. I will go 180
First to belie thee with an hour of rest,
Which will be deep and calm, I feel: and then . . .
O, multitudinous Hell, the fiends will shake
Thine arches with the laughter of their joy!
There shall be lamentation heard in Heaven 185
As o'er an angel fallen; and upon Earth
All good shall droop and sicken, and ill things
Shall with a spirit of unnatural life
Stir and be quickened . . . even as I am now. [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*Before the Castle of Petrella. Enter BEATRICE and LUCRETIA above on the Ramparts.*

Beatrice. They come not yet.

Lucretia. 'Tis scarce midnight.

Beatrice. How slow

Behind the course of thought, even sick with speed,
Lags leaden-footed time!

Lucretia. The minutes pass . . .
If he should wake before the deed is done?

Beatrice. O, mother! He must never wake again. 5
What thou hast said persuades me that our act
Will but dislodge a spirit of deep hell
Out of a human form.

Lucretia. 'Tis true he spoke
Of death and judgement with strange confidence
For one so wicked; as a man believing 10
In God, yet recking not of good or ill.
And yet to die without confession! . . .

Beatrice. Oh!
Believe that Heaven is merciful and just,
And will not add our dread necessity
To the amount of his offences.

Enter OLIMPIO and MARZIO, below.

Lucretia. See, 15
They come.

Beatrice. All mortal things must hasten thus
To their dark end. Let us go down.

[Exeunt LUCRETIA and BEATRICE from above.]

Olimpio. How feel you to this work?

Marzio. As one who thinks
A thousand crowns excellent market price
For an old murderer's life. Your cheeks are pale. 20

Olimpio. It is the white reflection of your own,
Which you call pale.

Marzio. Is that their natural hue?

Olimpio. Or 'tis my hate and the deferred desire
To wreak it, which extinguishes their blood.

Marzio. You are inclined then to this business?

Olimpio. Ay. 25
If one should bribe me with a thousand crowns
To kill a serpent which had stung my child,
I could not be more willing.

Enter BEATRICE and LUCRETIA, below.

Noble ladies!

Beatrice. Are ye resolved?

Olimpio. Is he asleep?

Marzio. Is all
Quiet?

Lucretia. I mixed an opiate with his drink:
He sleeps so soundly . . . 30

Beatrice. That his death will be
But as a change of sin-chastising dreams,
A dark continuance of the Hell within him,
Which God extinguish! But ye are resolved?
Ye know it is a high and holy deed? 35

Olimpio. We are resolved.

Marzio. As to the how this act
Be warranted, it rests with you.

Beatrice. Well, follow!

Olimpio. Hush! Hark! What noise is that?

Marzio. Ha! some one comes!

Beatrice. Ye conscience-stricken cravens, rock to rest
Your baby hearts. It is the iron gate, 40
Which ye left open, swinging to the wind,
That enters whistling as in scorn. Come, follow!
And be your steps like mine, light, quick and bold. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE III.—*An Apartment in the Castle. Enter BEATRICE and LUCRETIA.*

Lucretia. They are about it now.

Beatrice. Nay, it is done.

Lucretia. I have not heard him groan.

Beatrice.

He will not groan.

Lucretia. What sound is that?

Beatrice.

List! 'tis the tread of feet

About his bed.

Lucretia. My God!

If he be now a cold stiff corpse . . .

Beatrice.

O, fear not

5

What may be done, but what is left undone:

The act seals all.

Enter OLIMPPIO and MARZIO.

Is it accomplished?

Marzio.

What?

Olimpio. Did you not call?

Beatrice.

When?

Olimpio.

Now.

Beatrice.

I ask if all is over?

Olimpio. We dare not kill an old and sleeping man;

His thin gray hair, his stern and reverend brow,

10

His veined hands crossed on his heaving breast,

And the calm innocent sleep in which he lay,

Quelled me. Indeed, indeed, I cannot do it.

Marzio. But I was bolder; for I chid Olimpio,

And bade him bear his wrongs to his own grave

15

And leave me the reward. And now my knife

Touched the loose wrinkled throat, when the old man

Stirred in his sleep, and said, 'God! hear, O, hear,

A father's curse! What, art Thou not our Father?'

And then he laughed. I knew it was the ghost

20

Of my dead father speaking through his lips,

And could not kill him.

Beatrice.

Miserable slaves!

Where, if ye dare not kill a sleeping man,

Found ye the boldness to return to me

With such a deed undone? Base palterers!

25

Cowards and traitors! Why, the very conscience

Which ye would sell for gold and for revenge

Is an equivocation: it sleeps over

A thousand daily acts disgracing men;

And when a deed where mercy insults Heaven . . .

30

Why do I talk? [*Snatching a dagger from one of them and raising it.*

Hadst thou a tongue to say,

'She murdered her own father!'—I must do it!

But never dream ye shall outlive him long!

Olimpio. Stop, for God's sake!

Marzio.

I will go back and kill him.

Olimpio. Give me the weapon, we must do thy will.

35

Beatrice. Take it! Depart! Return! [*Exeunt OLIMPPIO and MARZIO.*

How pale thou art!

to reverend] reverent all editions.

We do but that which 'twere a deadly crime
To leave undone.

Lucretia. Would it were done!

Beatrice. Even whilst
That doubt is passing through your mind, the world
Is conscious of a change. Darkness and Hell
Have swallowed up the vapour they sent forth
To blacken the sweet light of life. My breath
Comes, methinks, lighter, and the jellied blood
Runs freely through my veins. Hark!

Enter OLIMPIO and MARZIO.

He is . . .

Olimpio. Dead!

Marzio. We strangled him that there might be no blood;
And then we threw his heavy corpse i' the garden
Under the balcony; 'twill seem it fell. 45

Beatrice (*giving them a bag of coin*). Here, take this gold, and hasten
to your homes.

And, Marzio, because thou wast only awed
By that which made me tremble, wear thou this! 50
[Clothes him in a rich mantle.

It was the mantle which my grandfather
Wore in his high prosperity, and men
Envied his state: so may they envy thine.
Thou wert a weapon in the hand of God
To a just use. Live long and thrive! And, mark, 55
If thou hast crimes, repent: this deed is none. *[A horn is sounded.*

Lucretia. Hark, 'tis the castle horn; my God! it sounds
Like the last trump.

Beatrice. Some tedious guest is coming.

Lucretia. The drawbridge is let down; there is a tramp
Of horses in the court; fly, hide yourselves! 60

[Exeunt OLIMPIO and MARZIO.]

Beatrice. Let us retire to counterfeit deep rest;
I scarcely need to counterfeit it now:
The spirit which doth reign within these limbs
Seems strangely undisturbed. I could even sleep 64
Fearless and calm: all ill is surely past. *[Exeunt.]*

SCENE IV.—*Another Apartment in the Castle. Enter on one side the
LEGATE SAVELLA, introduced by a Servant, and on the other LUCRETIA
and BERNARDO.*

Savella. Lady, my duty to his Holiness
Be my excuse that thus unseasonably
I break upon your rest. I must speak with
Count Cenci; doth he sleep?

Lucretia (*in a hurried and confused manner*). I think he sleeps;
Yet wake him not, I pray, spare me awhile, 5

He is a wicked and a wrathful man ;
 Should he be roused out of his sleep to-night,
 Which is, I know, a hell of angry dreams,
 It were not well ; indeed it were not well.
 Wait till day break . . . (*aside*) O, I am deadly sick!

10

Savella. I grieve thus to distress you, but the Count
 Must answer charges of the gravest import,
 And suddenly ; such my commission is.

Lucretia (with increased agitation). I dare not rouse him : I know
 none who dare . . .

'Twere perilous ; . . . you might as safely waken
 A serpent ; or a corpse in which some fiend
 Were laid to sleep.

15

Savella. Lady, my moments here
 Are counted. I must rouse him from his sleep,
 Since none else dare.

Lucretia (aside). O, terror ! O, despair !
 (*To BERNARDO.*) Bernardo, conduct you the Lord Legate to
 Your father's chamber. [*Exeunt SAVELLA and BERNARDO.*]

20

Enter BEATRICE.

Beatrice. 'Tis a messenger
 Come to arrest the culprit who now stands
 Before the throne of unappealable God.
 Both Earth and Heaven, consenting arbiters,
 Acquit our deed.

Lucretia. Oh, agony of fear !
 Would that he yet might live ! Even now I heard
 The Legate's followers whisper as they passed
 They had a warrant for his instant death.
 All was prepared by unforbidden means
 Which we must pay so dearly, having done.
 Even now they search the tower, and find the body ;
 Now they suspect the truth ; now they consult
 Before they come to tax us with the fact ;
 O, horrible, 'tis all discovered !

25

Beatrice. Mother,
 What is done wisely, is done well. Be bold
 As thou art just. 'Tis like a truant child
 To fear that others know what thou hast done,
 Even from thine own strong consciousness, and thus
 Write on unsteady eyes and altered cheeks
 All thou wouldst hide. Be faithful to thyself,
 And fear no other witness but thy fear.
 For if, as cannot be, some circumstance
 Should rise in accusation, we can blind
 Suspicion with such cheap astonishment,
 Or overbear it with such guiltless pride,
 As murderers cannot feign. The deed is done,

35

40

45

And what may follow now regards not me.

I am as universal as the light ;

Free as the earth-surrounding air ; as firm

As the world's centre. Consequence, to me,

Is as the wind which strikes the solid rock

But shakes it not.

[*A cry within and tumult.*

Voices.

Murder! Murder! Murder!

Enter BERNARDO and SAVELLA.

Savella (to his followers). Go search the castle round ; sound the alarm ;
Look to the gates that none escape!

Beatrice.

What now?

Bernardo. I know not what to say . . . my father's dead.

Beatrice. How ; dead ! he only sleeps ; you mistake, brother.

His sleep is very calm, very like death ;

'Tis wonderful how well a tyrant sleeps.

He is not dead?

Bernardo. Dead ; murdered.

Lucretia (with extreme agitation). Oh no, no,

He is not murdered though he may be dead ;

I have alone the keys of those apartments.

Savella. Ha ! Is it so?

Beatrice.

My Lord, I pray excuse us ;

We will retire ; my mother is not well :

She seems quite overcome with this strange horror.

[*Exeunt* LUCRETIA and BEATRICE.

Savella. Can you suspect who may have murdered him ?

Bernardo. I know not what to think.

Savella.

Can you name any

Who had an interest in his death?

Bernardo.

Alas!

I can name none who had not, and those most

Who most lament that such a deed is done ;

My mother, and my sister, and myself.

Savella. 'Tis strange ! There were clear marks of violence.

I found the old man's body in the moonlight

Hanging beneath the window of his chamber,

Among the branches of a pine : he could not

Have fallen there, for all his limbs lay heaped

And effortless ; 'tis true there was no blood . . .

Favour me, Sir ; it much imports your house

That all should be made clear ; to tell the ladies

That I request their presence.

[*Exit* BERNARDO.

Enter GUARDS bringing in MARZIO.

Guard.

We have one.

Officer. My Lord, we found this ruffian and another

Lurking among the rocks ; there is no doubt

But that they are the murderers of Count Cenci :

Each had a bag of coin ; this fellow wore

A gold-inwoven robe, which shining bright
Under the dark rocks to the glimmering moon
Betrayed them to our notice: the other fell
Desperately fighting.

85

Savella. What does he confess?

Officer. He keeps firm silence; but these lines found on him
May speak.

Savella. Their language is at least sincere.

[Reads.

'To the Lady Beatrice.

90

'That the atonement of what my nature sickens to conjecture may soon
arrive, I send thee, at thy brother's desire, those who will speak and do more
than I dare write. . . .

'Thy devoted servant, Orsino.'

Enter LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, and BERNARDO.

Knowest thou this writing, Lady?

Beatrice.

No.

Savella.

Nor thou?

95

Lucretia. (*Her conduct throughout the scene is marked by extreme agitation.*) Where was it found? What is it? It should be
Orsino's hand! It speaks of that strange horror
Which never yet found utterance, but which made
Between that hapless child and her dead father
A gulf of obscure hatred.

Savella.

Is it so?

100

Is it true, Lady, that thy father did
Such outrages as to awaken in thee
Unfilial hate?

Beatrice. Not hate, 'twas more than hate:
This is most true, yet wherefore question me?

Savella. There is a deed demanding question done;
Thou hast a secret which will answer not.

105

Beatrice. What sayest? My Lord, your words are bold and rash.

Savella. I do arrest all present in the name
Of the Pope's Holiness. You must to Rome.

Lucretia. O, not to Rome! Indeed we are not guilty.

110

Beatrice. Guilty! Who dares talk of guilt? My Lord,
I am more innocent of parricide

Than is a child born fatherless . . . Dear mother,
Your gentleness and patience are no shield
For this keen-judging world, this two-edged lie,
Which seems, but is not. What! will human laws,

115

Rather will ye who are their ministers,
Bar all access to retribution first,
And then, when Heaven doth interpose to do
What ye neglect, arming familiar things

120

To the redress of an unwonted crime,
Make ye the victims who demanded it
Culprits? 'Tis ye are culprits! That poor wretch
Who stands so pale, and trembling, and amazed,

If it be true he murdered Cenci, was
 A sword in the right hand of justest God.
 Wherefore should I have wielded it? Unless
 The crimes which mortal tongue dare never name
 God therefore scruples to avenge.

Savella. You own
 That you desired his death?

Beatrice. It would have been
 A crime no less than his, if for one moment
 That fierce desire had faded in my heart.
 'Tis true I did believe, and hope, and pray,
 Ay, I even knew . . . for God is wise and just,
 That some strange sudden death hung over him.
 'Tis true that this did happen, and most true
 There was no other rest for me on earth,
 No other hope in Heaven . . . now what of this?

Savella. Strange thoughts beget strange deeds; and here are both:
 I judge thee not.

Beatrice. And yet, if you arrest me,
 You are the judge and executioner
 Of that which is the life of life: the breath
 Of accusation kills an innocent name,
 And leaves for lame acquittal the poor life
 Which is a mask without it. 'Tis most false
 That I am guilty of foul parricide;
 Although I must rejoice, for justest cause,
 That other hands have sent my father's soul
 To ask the mercy he denied to me.
 Now leave us free; stain not a noble house
 With vague surmises of rejected crime;
 Add to our sufferings and your own neglect
 No heavier sum: let them have been enough:
 Leave us the wreck we have.

Savella. I dare not, Lady.
 I pray that you prepare yourselves for Rome:
 There the Pope's further pleasure will be known.

Lucretia. O, not to Rome! O, take us not to Rome!

Beatrice. Why not to Rome, dear mother? There as here
 Our innocence is as an armèd heel
 To trample accusation. God is there
 As here, and with His shadow ever clothes
 The innocent, the injured and the weak;
 And such are we. Cheer up, dear Lady, lean
 On me; collect your wandering thoughts. My Lord,
 As soon as you have taken some refreshment,
 And had all such examinations made
 Upon the spot, as may be necessary
 To the full understanding of this matter,
 We shall be ready. Mother; will you come?

Lucretia. Ha! they will bind us to the rack, and wrest

Self-accusation from our agony!
 Will Giacomo be there? Orsino? Marzio?
 All present; all confronted; all demanding
 Each from the other's countenance the thing
 Which is in every heart! O, misery! 175
[She faints, and is borne out.]

Savella. She faints: an ill appearance this.

Beatrice. My Lord,

She knows not yet the uses of the world.
 She fears that power is as a beast which grasps
 And loosens not: a snake whose look transmutes
 All things to guilt which is its nutriment. 180
 She cannot know how well the supine slaves
 Of blind authority read the truth of things
 When written on a brow of guilelessness:
 She sees not yet triumphant Innocence
 Stand at the judgement-seat of mortal man, 185
 A judge and an accuser of the wrong
 Which drags it there. Prepare yourself, my Lord;
 Our suite will join yours in the court below. *[Exeunt.]*

END OF THE FOURTH ACT.

ACT V

SCENE I.—*An Apartment in ORSINO'S Palace. Enter ORSINO and GIACOMO.*

Giacomo. Do evil deeds thus quickly come to end?
 O, that the vain remorse which must chastise
 Crimes done, had but as loud a voice to warn
 As its keen sting is mortal to avenge!
 O, that the hour when present had cast off 5
 The mantle of its mystery, and shown
 The ghastly form with which it now returns
 When its scared game is roused, cheering the hounds
 Of conscience to their prey! Alas! Alas!
 It was a wicked thought, a piteous deed, 10
 To kill an old and hoary-headed father.

Orsino. It has turned out unluckily, in truth.

Giacomo. To violate the sacred doors of sleep;
 To cheat kind Nature of the placid death
 Which she prepares for overwearied age; 15
 To drag from Heaven an unrepentant soul
 Which might have quenched in reconciling prayers
 A life of burning crimes . . .

Orsino. You cannot say
 I urged you to the deed.

Giacomo. O, had I never
 Found in thy smooth and ready countenance 20
 The mirror of my darkest thoughts; hadst thou

Never with hints and questions made me look
Upon the monster of my thought, until
It grew familiar to desire . . .

Orsino.

'Tis thus

Men cast the blame of their unprosperous acts 25

Upon the abettors of their own resolve;

Or anything but their weak, guilty selves.

And yet, confess the truth, it is the peril

In which you stand that gives you this pale sickness

Of penitence; confess 'tis fear disguised 30

From its own shame that takes the mantle now

Of thin remorse. What if we yet were safe?

Giacomo. How can that be? Already Beatrice,

Lucretia and the murderer are in prison.

I doubt not officers are, whilst we speak, 35

Sent to arrest us.

Orsino.

I have all prepared

For instant flight. We can escape even now,

So we take fleet occasion by the hair.

Giacomo. Rather expire in tortures, as I may.

What! will you cast by self-accusing flight 40

Assured conviction upon Beatrice?

She, who alone in this unnatural work,

Stands like God's angel ministered upon

By fiends; avenging such a nameless wrong

As turns black parricide to piety; 45

Whilst we for basest ends . . . I fear, Orsino,

While I consider all your words and looks,

Comparing them with your proposal now,

That you must be a villain. For what end

Could you engage in such a perilous crime, 50

Training me on with hints, and signs, and smiles,

Even to this gulf? Thou art no liar? No,

Thou art a lie! Traitor and murderer!

Coward and slave! But, no, defend thyself;

[*Drawing.*

Let the sword speak what the indignant tongue 55

Disdains to brand thee with.

Orsino.

Put up your weapon.

Is it the desperation of your fear

Makes you thus rash and sudden with a friend,

Now ruined for your sake? If honest anger

Have moved you, know, that what I just proposed 60

Was but to try you. As for me, I think,

Thankless affection led me to this point,

From which, if my firm temper could repent,

I cannot now recede. Even whilst we speak

The ministers of justice wait below: 65

They grant me these brief moments. Now if you

Have any word of melancholy comfort

To speak to your pale wife, 'twere best to pass
Out at the postern, and avoid them so.

Giacomo. O, generous friend! How canst thou pardon me? 70
Would that my life could purchase thine!

Orsino. That wish
Now comes a day too late. Haste; fare thee well!
Hear'st thou not steps along the corridor? [*Exit GIACOMO.*

I'm sorry for it; but the guards are waiting
At his own gate, and such was my contrivance 75
That I might rid me both of him and them.

I thought to act a solemn comedy
Upon the painted scene of this new world,
And to attain my own peculiar ends
By some such plot of mingled good and ill 80
As others weave; but there arose a Power
Which grasped and snapped the threads of my device
And turned it to a net of ruin . . . Ha! [*A shout is heard.*

Is that my name I hear proclaimed abroad?
But I will pass, wrapped in a vile disguise; 85
Rags on my back, and a false innocence

Upon my face, through the misdeeming crowd
Which judges by what seems. 'Tis easy then
For a new name and for a country new,
And a new life, fashioned on old desires, 90

To change the honours of abandoned Rome.
And these must be the masks of that within,
Which must remain unaltered . . . Oh, I fear
That what is past will never let me rest!
Why, when none else is conscious, but myself, 95

Of my misdeeds, should my own heart's contempt
Trouble me? Have I not the power to fly
My own reproaches? Shall I be the slave
Of . . . what? A word? which those of this false world
Employ against each other, not themselves; 100
As men wear daggers not for self-offence.

But if I am mistaken, where shall I
Find the disguise to hide me from myself,
As now I skulk from every other eye? [*Exit.*

SCENE II.—*A Hall of Justice. CAMILLO, JUDGES, &c., are discovered seated; MARZIO is led in.*

First Judge. Accused, do you persist in your denial?
I ask you, are you innocent, or guilty?
I demand who were the participators
In your offence? Speak truth and the whole truth.

Marzio. My God! I did not kill him; I know nothing; 5
Olimpio sold the robe to me from which
You would infer my guilt.

Second Judge. Away with him!

First Judge. Dare you, with lips yet white from the rack's kiss

Speak false? Is it so soft a questioner,
That you would bandy lover's talk with it 10
Till it wind out your life and soul? Away!

Marzio. Spare me! O, spare! I will confess.

First Judge.

Then speak.

Marzio. I strangled him in his sleep.

First Judge.

Who urged you to it?

Marzio. His own son Giacomo, and the young prelate
Orsino sent me to Petrella; there 15
The ladies Beatrice and Lucretia
Tempted me with a thousand crowns, and I
And my companion forthwith murdered him.
Now let me die.

First Judge. This sounds as bad as truth. Guards, there,
Lead forth the prisoner!

Enter LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, and GIACOMO, guarded.

Look upon this man;

20

When did you see him last?

Beatrice. We never saw him.

Marzio. You know me too well, Lady Beatrice.

Beatrice. I know thee! How? where? when?

Marzio. You know 'twas I

Whom you did urge with menaces and bribes
To kill your father. When the thing was done 25
You clothed me in a robe of woven gold
And bade me thrive: how I have thriven, you see.
You, my Lord Giacomo, Lady Lucretia,
You know that what I speak is true.

[*BEATRICE advances towards him; he covers his face, and shrinks back.*

Oh, dart

The terrible resentment of those eyes 30
On the dead earth! Turn them away from me!
They wound: 'twas torture forced the truth. My Lords,
Having said this let me be led to death.

Beatrice. Poor wretch, I pity thee: yet stay awhile.

Camillo. Guards, lead him not away.

Beatrice. Cardinal Camillo, 35

You have a good repute for gentleness
And wisdom: can it be that you sit here
To countenance a wicked farce like this?
When some obscure and trembling slave is dragged 40
From sufferings which might shake the sternest heart
And bade to answer, not as he believes,
But as those may suspect or do desire
Whose questions thence suggest their own reply:
And that in peril of such hideous torments
As merciful God spares even the damned. Speak now 45
The thing you surely know, which is that you,
If your fine frame were stretched upon that wheel,

And you were told: 'Confess that you did poison
 Your little nephew; that fair blue-eyed child
 Who was the lodestar of your life:'—and though 50
 All see, since his most swift and piteous death,
 That day and night, and heaven and earth, and time,
 And all the things hoped for or done therein
 Are changed to you, through your exceeding grief,
 Yet you would say, 'I confess anything:' 55
 And beg from your tormentors, like that slave,
 The refuge of dishonourable death.
 I pray thee, Cardinal, that thou assert
 My innocence.

Camillo (much moved). What shall we think, my Lords?
 Shame on these tears! I thought the heart was frozen 60
 Which is their fountain. I would pledge my soul
 That she is guiltless.

Judge. Yet she must be tortured.

Camillo. I would as soon have tortured mine own nephew
 (If he now lived he would be just her age;
 His hair, too, was her colour, and his eyes 65
 Like hers in shape, but blue and not so deep)
 As that most perfect image of God's love
 That ever came sorrowing upon the earth.
 She is as pure as speechless infancy!

Judge. Well, be her purity on your head, my Lord, 70
 If you forbid the rack. His Holiness
 Enjoined us to pursue this monstrous crime
 By the severest forms of law; nay even
 To stretch a point against the criminals.
 The prisoners stand accused of parricide 75
 Upon such evidence as justifies
 Torture.

Beatrice. What evidence? This man's?

Judge. Even so.

Beatrice (to MARZIO). Come near. And who art thou thus chosen forth
 Out of the multitude of living men
 To kill the innocent?

Marzio. I am Marzio, 80
 Thy father's vassal.

Beatrice. Fix thine eyes on mine;
 Answer to what I ask. [Turning to the JUDGES.

I prithee mark
 His countenance: unlike bold calumny
 Which sometimes dares not speak the thing it looks,
 He dares not look the thing he speaks, but bends 85
 His gaze on the blind earth.

(To MARZIO.) What! wilt thou say
 That I did murder my own father?

Marzio. Oh!
 Spare me! My brain swims round . . . I cannot speak . . .

It was that horrid torture forced the truth.

Take me away! Let her not look on me!

I am a guilty miserable wretch;

I have said all I know; now, let me die!

Beatrice. My Lords, if by my nature I had been

So stern, as to have planned the crime alleged,

Which your suspicions dictate to this slave,

And the rack makes him utter, do you think

I should have left this two-edged instrument

Of my misdeed; this man, this bloody knife

With my own name engraven on the heft,

Lying unsheathed amid a world of foes,

For my own death? That with such horrible need

For deepest silence, I should have neglected

So trivial a precaution, as the making

His tomb the keeper of a secret written

On a thief's memory? What is his poor life?

What are a thousand lives? A parricide

Had trampled them like dust; and, see, he lives!

(*Turning to MARZIO.*) And thou . . .

Marzio. Oh, spare me! Speak to me no more!

That stern yet piteous look, those solemn tones,

Wound worse than torture.

(*To the JUDGES.*) I have told it all;

For pity's sake lead me away to death.

Camillo. Guards, lead him nearer the Lady Beatrice,

He shrinks from her regard like autumn's leaf

From the keen breath of the serenest north.

Beatrice. O thou who tremblest on the giddy verge

Of life and death, pause ere thou answerest me;

So mayst thou answer God with less dismay:

What evil have we done thee? I, alas!

Have lived but on this earth a few sad years,

And so my lot was ordered, that a father

First turned the moments of awakening life

To drops, each poisoning youth's sweet hope; and then

Stabbed with one blow my everlasting soul;

And my untainted fame; and even that peace

Which sleeps within the core of the heart's heart;

But the wound was not mortal; so my hate

Became the only worship I could lift

To our great father, who in pity and love,

Armed thee, as thou dost say, to cut him off;

And thus his wrong becomes my accusation;

And art thou the accuser? If thou hopest

Mercy in heaven, show justice upon earth:

Worse than a bloody hand is a hard heart.

If thou hast done murders, made thy life's path

Over the trampled laws of God and man,

Rush not before thy Judge, and say: 'My maker,

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I have done this and more; for there was one
 Who was most pure and innocent on earth;
 And because she endured what never any
 Guilty or innocent endured before: 140
 Because her wrongs could not be told, not thought;
 Because thy hand at length did rescue her;
 I with my words killed her and all her kin.
 Think, I adjure you, what it is to slay
 The reverence living in the minds of men 145
 Towards our ancient house, and stainless fame!
 Think what it is to strangle infant pity,
 Cradled in the belief of guileless looks,
 Till it become a crime to suffer. Think
 What 'tis to blot with infamy and blood 150
 All that which shows like innocence, and is,
 Hear me, great God! I swear, most innocent,
 So that the world lose all discrimination
 Between the sly, fierce, wild regard of guilt,
 And that which now compels thee to reply 155
 To what I ask: Am I, or am I not
 A parricide?

Marzio. Thou art not!

Judge. What is this?

Marzio. I here declare those whom I did accuse
 Are innocent. 'Tis I alone am guilty.

Judge. Drag him away to torments; let them be 160
 Subtle and long drawn out, to tear the folds
 Of the heart's inmost cell. Unbind him not
 Till he confess.

Marzio. Torture me as ye will:
 A keener pang has wrung a higher truth
 From my last breath. She is most innocent! 165
 Bloodhounds, not men, glut yourselves well with me;
 I will not give you that fine piece of nature
 To rend and ruin. [*Exit MARZIO, guarded.*]

Camillo. What say ye now, my Lords?

Judge. Let tortures strain the truth till it be white
 As snow thrice sifted by the frozen wind. 170

Camillo. Yet stained with blood.

Judge (to BEATRICE). Know you this paper, Lady?

Beatrice. Entrap me not with questions. Who stands here
 As my accuser? Ha! wilt thou be he,
 Who art my judge? Accuser, witness, judge,
 What, all in one? Here is Orsino's name; 175
 Where is Orsino? Let his eye meet mine.
 What means this scrawl? Alas! ye know not what,
 And therefore on the chance that it may be
 Some evil, will ye kill us?

Enter an Officer.

Officer. Marzio's dead.

Judge. What did he say?

Officer. Nothing. As soon as we
Had bound him on the wheel, he smiled on us,
As one who baffles a deep adversary;
And holding his breath, died. 180

Judge. There remains nothing
But to apply the question to those prisoners,
Who yet remain stubborn.

Camillo. I overrule 185
Further proceedings, and in the behalf
Of these most innocent and noble persons
Will use my interest with the Holy Father.

Judge. Let the Pope's pleasure then be done. Meanwhile
Conduct these culprits each to separate cells; 190
And be the engines ready: for this night
If the Pope's resolution be as grave,
Pious, and just as once, I'll wring the truth
Out of those nerves and sinews, groan by groan. [*Exeunt.*]

SCENE III.—*The Cell of a Prison.* BEATRICE is discovered asleep
on a couch. *Enter* BERNARDO.

Bernardo. How gently slumber rests upon her face,
Like the last thoughts of some day sweetly spent
Closing in night and dreams, and so prolonged.
After such torments as she bore last night,
How light and soft her breathing comes. Ay me! 5
Methinks that I shall never sleep again.
But I must shake the heavenly dew of rest
From this sweet folded flower, thus . . . wake! awake!
What, sister, canst thou sleep?

Beatrice (awaking). I was just dreaming
That we were all in Paradise. Thou knowest 10
This cell seems like a kind of Paradise
After our father's presence.

Bernardo. Dear, dear sister,
Would that thy dream were not a dream! O God!
How shall I tell?

Beatrice. What wouldst thou tell, sweet brother?

Bernardo. Look not so calm and happy, or even whilst 15
I stand considering what I have to say
My heart will break.

Beatrice. See now, thou mak'st me weep:
How very friendless thou wouldst be, dear child,
If I were dead. Say what thou hast to say.

Bernardo. They have confessed; they could endure no more 20
The tortures . . .

Beatrice. Ha! What was there to confess?

They must have told some weak and wicked lie
 To flatter their tormentors. Have they said
 That they were guilty? O white innocence,
 That thou shouldst wear the mask of guilt to hide
 Thine awful and serenest countenance
 From those who know thee not! 25

Enter JUDGE with LUCRETIA and GIACOMO, guarded.

Ignoble hearts!

For some brief spasms of pain, which are at least
 As mortal as the limbs through which they pass,
 Are centuries of high splendour laid in dust? 30
 And that eternal honour which should live
 Sunlike, above the reek of mortal fame,
 Changed to a mockery and a byword? What!
 Will you give up these bodies to be dragged
 At horses' heels, so that our hair should sweep 35
 The footsteps of the vain and senseless crowd,
 Who, that they may make our calamity
 Their worship and their spectacle, will leave
 The churches and the theatres as void
 As their own hearts? Shall the light multitude 40
 Fling, at their choice, curses or faded pity,
 Sad funeral flowers to deck a living corpse,
 Upon us as we pass to pass away,
 And leave . . . what memory of our having been?
 Infamy, blood, terror, despair? O thou, 45
 Who wert a mother to the parentless,
 Kill not thy child! Let not her wrongs kill thee!
 Brother, lie down with me upon the rack,
 And let us each be silent as a corpse;
 It soon will be as soft as any grave. 50
 'Tis but the falsehood it can wring from fear
 Makes the rack cruel.

Giacomo. They will tear the truth
 Even from thee at last, those cruel pains:
 For pity's sake say thou art guilty now.

Lucretia. Oh, speak the truth! Let us all quickly die;
 And after death, God is our judge, not they; 55
 He will have mercy on us.

Bernardo. If indeed
 It can be true, say so, dear sister mine;
 And then the Pope will surely pardon you,
 And all be well.

Judge. Confess, or I will warp 60
 Your limbs with such keen tortures . . .

Beatrice. Tortures! Turn
 The rack henceforth into a spinning-wheel!
 Torture your dog, that he may tell when last
 He lapped the blood his master shed . . . not me!

My pangs are of the mind, and of the heart,
 And of the soul; ay, of the inmost soul,
 Which weeps within tears as of burning gall
 To see, in this ill world where none are true,
 My kindred false to their deserted selves.
 And with considering all the wretched life
 Which I have lived, and its now wretched end,
 And the small justice shown by Heaven and Earth
 To me or mine; and what a tyrant thou art,
 And what slaves these; and what a world we make,
 The oppressor and the oppressed . . . such pangs compel
 My answer. What is it thou wouldst with me? 65 70 75

Judge. Art thou not guilty of thy father's death?

Beatrice. Or wilt thou rather tax high-judging God
 That He permitted such an act as that
 Which I have suffered, and which He beheld;
 Made it unutterable, and took from it
 All refuge, all revenge, all consequence,
 But that which thou hast called my father's death?
 Which is or is not what men call a crime,
 Which either I have done, or have not done;
 Say what ye will. I shall deny no more.
 If ye desire it thus, thus let it be,
 And so an end of all. Now do your will;
 No other pains shall force another word. 80 85

Judge. She is convicted, but has not confessed.
 Be it enough. Until their final sentence
 Let none have converse with them. You, young Lord,
 Linger not here! 90

Beatrice. Oh, tear him not away!

Judge. Guards, do your duty.

Bernardo (embracing BEATRICE). Oh! would ye divide
 Body from soul?

Officer. That is the headsman's business. 95

[*Exeunt all but LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, and GIACOMO.*]

Giacomo. Have I confessed? Is it all over now?
 No hope! No refuge! O weak, wicked tongue
 Which hast destroyed me, would that thou hadst been
 Cut out and thrown to dogs first! To have killed
 My father first, and then betrayed my sister;
 Ay, thee! the one thing innocent and pure
 In this black guilty world, to that which I
 So well deserve! My wife! my little ones!
 Destitute, helpless, and I . . . Father! God!
 Canst Thou forgive even the unforgiving,
 When their full hearts break thus, thus! . . . 100 105

[*Covers his face and weeps.*]

Lucretia.

O my child!

To what a dreadful end are we all come!
 Why did I yield? Why did I not sustain

Those torments? Oh, that I were all dissolved
 Into these fast and unavailing tears,
 Which flow and feel not!

110

Beatrice. What 'twas weak to do,
 'Tis weaker to lament, once being done;
 Take cheer! The God who knew my wrong, and made
 Our speedy act the angel of His wrath,
 Seems, and but seems, to have abandoned us.
 Let us not think that we shall die for this.
 Brother, sit near me; give me your firm hand,
 You had a manly heart. Bear up! Bear up!
 O dearest Lady, put your gentle head
 Upon my lap, and try to sleep awhile:
 Your eyes look pale, hollow and overworn,
 With heaviness of watching and slow grief.
 Come, I will sing you some low, sleepy tune,
 Not cheerful, nor yet sad; some dull old thing,
 Some outworn and unused monotony,
 Such as our country gossips sing and spin,
 Till they almost forget they live: lie down!
 So, that will do. Have I forgot the words?
 Faith! They are sadder than I thought they were.

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SONG

False friend, wilt thou smile or weep
 When my life is laid asleep?
 Little cares for a smile or a tear,
 The clay-cold corpse upon the bier!
 Farewell! Heigho!

130

What is this whispers low?
 There is a snake in thy smile, my dear;
 And bitter poison within thy tear.

135

Sweet sleep, were death like to thee,
 Or if thou couldst mortal be,
 I would close these eyes of pain;
 When to wake? Never again.

140

O World! Farewell!

Listen to the passing bell!

It says, thou and I must part,
 With a light and a heavy heart.

144

[*The scene closes.*]

SCENE IV.—*A Hall of the Prison. Enter CAMILLO and BERNARDO.*

Camillo. The Pope is stern; not to be moved or bent.
 He looked as calm and keen as is the engine
 Which tortures and which kills, exempt itself
 From aught that it inflicts; a marble form,
 A rite, a law, a custom: not a man.
 He frowned, as if to frown had been the trick
 Of his machinery, on the advocates
 Presenting the defences, which he tore

5

And threw behind, muttering with hoarse, harsh voice:
 'Which among ye defended their old father
 Killed in his sleep?' Then to another: 'Thou
 Dost this in virtue of thy place; 'tis well.'
 He turned to me then, looking deprecation,
 And said these three words, coldly: 'They must die.'

Bernardo. And yet you left him not?

Camillo. I urged him still;
 Pleading, as I could guess, the devilish wrong
 Which prompted your unnatural parent's death.
 And he replied: 'Paolo Santa Croce
 Murdered his mother yester evening,
 And he is fled. Parricide grows so rife
 That soon, for some just cause no doubt, the young
 Will strangle us all, dozing in our chairs.
 Authority, and power, and hoary hair
 Are grown crimes capital. You are my nephew,
 You come to ask their pardon; stay a moment;
 Here is their sentence; never see me more
 Till, to the letter, it be all fulfilled.'

Bernardo. O God, not so! I did believe indeed
 That all you said was but sad preparation
 For happy news. Oh, there are words and looks
 To bend the sternest purpose! Once I knew them,
 Now I forget them at my dearest need.
 What think you if I seek him out, and bathe
 His feet and robe with hot and bitter tears?
 Importune him with prayers, vexing his brain
 With my perpetual cries, until in rage
 He strike me with his pastoral cross, and trample
 Upon my prostrate head, so that my blood
 May stain the senseless dust on which he treads,
 And remorse waken mercy? I will do it!
 Oh, wait till I return!

[*Rushes out.*]

Camillo. Alas! poor boy!
 A wreck-devoted seaman thus might pray
 To the deaf sea.

Enter LUCRETIA, BEATRICE, and GIACOMO, guarded.

Beatrice. I hardly dare to fear
 That thou bring'st other news than a just pardon.

Camillo. May God in heaven be less inexorable
 To the Pope's prayers, than he has been to mine.
 Here is the sentence and the warrant.

Beatrice (wildly). O
 My God! Can it be possible I have
 To die so suddenly? So young to go
 Under the obscure, cold, rotting, wormy ground!
 To be nailed down into a narrow place;
 To see no more sweet sunshine; hear no more

Blithe voice of living thing ; muse not again
 Upon familiar thoughts, sad, yet thus lost—
 How fearful! to be nothing! Or to be . . . 55
 What? Oh, where am I? Let me not go mad!
 Sweet Heaven, forgive weak thoughts! If there should be
 No God, no Heaven, no Earth in the void world ;
 The wide, gray, lampless, deep, unpeopled world!
 If all things then should be . . . my father's spirit, 60
 His eye, his voice, his touch surrounding me ;
 The atmosphere and breath of my dead life!
 If sometimes, as a shape more like himself,
 Even the form which tortured me on earth,
 Masked in gray hairs and wrinkles, he should come 65
 And wind me in his hellish arms, and fix
 His eyes on mine, and drag me down, down, down!
 For was he not alone omnipotent
 On Earth, and ever present? Even though dead,
 Does not his spirit live in all that breathe, 70
 And work for me and mine still the same ruin,
 Scorn, pain, despair? Who ever yet returned
 To teach the laws of Death's untrodden realm?
 Unjust perhaps as those which drive us now,
 Oh, whither, whither?

Lucretia. Trust in God's sweet love, 75
 The tender promises of Christ: ere night,
 Think, we shall be in Paradise.

Beatrice. 'Tis past!
 Whatever comes my heart shall sink no more.
 And yet, I know not why, your words strike chill:
 How tedious, false and cold seem all things. I 80
 Have met with much injustice in this world ;
 No difference has been made by God or man,
 Or any power moulding my wretched lot,
 'Twixt good or evil, as regarded me.
 I am cut off from the only world I know, 85
 From light, and life, and love, in youth's sweet prime.
 You do well telling me to trust in God,
 I hope I do trust in Him. In whom else
 Can any trust? And yet my heart is cold.

*[During the latter speeches GIACOMO has retired conversing
 with CAMILLO, who now goes out ; GIACOMO advances.]*

Giacomo. Know you not, Mother . . . Sister, know you not? 90
 Bernardo even now is gone to implore
 The Pope to grant our pardon.

Lucretia. Child, perhaps
 It will be granted. We may all then live
 To make these woes a tale for distant years:
 Oh, what a thought! It gushes to my heart 95
 Like the warm blood.

Beatrice. Yet both will soon be cold.

Oh, trample out that thought! Worse than despair,
 Worse than the bitterness of death, is hope:
 It is the only ill which can find place
 Upon the giddy, sharp and narrow hour 100
 Tottering beneath us. Plead with the swift frost
 That it should spare the eldest flower of spring:
 Plead with awakening earthquake, o'er whose couch
 Even now a city stands, strong, fair, and free;
 Now stench and blackness yawn, like death. Oh, plead 105
 With famine, or wind-walking Pestilence,
 Blind lightning, or the deaf sea, not with man!
 Cruel, cold, formal man; righteous in words,
 In deeds a Cain. No, Mother, we must die:
 Since such is the reward of innocent lives; 110
 Such the alleviation of worst wrongs.
 And whilst our murderers live, and hard, cold men,
 Smiling and slow, walk through a world of tears
 To death as to life's sleep; 'twere just the grave
 Were some strange joy for us. Come, obscure Death, 115
 And wind me in thine all-embracing arms!
 Like a fond mother hide me in thy bosom,
 And rock me to the sleep from which none wake.
 Live ye, who live, subject to one another
 As we were once, who now . . .

BERNARDO *rushes in.*

Bernardo. Oh, horrible! 120
 That tears, that looks, that hope poured forth in prayer,
 Even till the heart is vacant and despairs,
 Should all be vain! The ministers of death
 Are waiting round the doors. I thought I saw
 Blood on the face of one . . . What if 'twere fancy? 125
 Soon the heart's blood of all I love on earth
 Will sprinkle him, and he will wipe it off
 As if 'twere only rain. O life! O world!
 Cover me! let me be no more! To see
 That perfect mirror of pure innocence 130
 Wherein I gazed, and grew happy and good,
 Shivered to dust! To see thee, Beatrice,
 Who made all lovely thou didst look upon . . .
 Thee, light of life . . . dead, dark! while I say, sister,
 To hear I have no sister; and thou, Mother, 135
 Whose love was as a bond to all our loves . . .
 Dead! The sweet bond broken!

Enter CAMILLO and GUARDS.

They come! Let me
 Kiss those warm lips before their crimson leaves
 Are blighted . . . white . . . cold. Say farewell, before

105 yawn *ed.* 1821; yawns *edd.* 1819, 1839. 136 was as a *Rossetti* *cj.*; was a *edd.* 1819, 1821, 1839.

Death chokes that gentle voice! Oh, let me hear
You speak! 140

Beatrice. Farewell, my tender brother. Think
Of our sad fate with gentleness, as now:
And let mild, pitying thoughts lighten for thee
Thy sorrow's load. Err not in harsh despair,
But tears and patience. One thing more, my child: 145
For thine own sake be constant to the love
Thou bearest us; and to the faith that I,
Though wrapped in a strange cloud of crime and shame,
Lived ever holy and unstained. And though
Ill tongues shall wound me, and our common name 150
Be as a mark stamped on thine innocent brow
For men to point at as they pass, do thou
Forbear, and never think a thought unkind
Of those, who perhaps love thee in their graves.
So mayest thou die as I do; fear and pain 155
Being subdued. Farewell! Farewell! Farewell!

Bernardo. I cannot say, farewell!

Camillo. Oh, Lady Beatrice!

Beatrice. Give yourself no unnecessary pain,
My dear Lord Cardinal. Here, Mother, tie
My girdle for me, and bind up this hair 160
In any simple knot; ay, that does well.
And yours I see is coming down. How often
Have we done this for one another; now
We shall not do it any more. My Lord,
We are quite ready. Well, 'tis very well. 165

THE END.

NOTE ON THE CENCI, BY MRS. SHELLEY

THE sort of mistake that Shelley made as to the extent of his own genius and powers, which led him deviously at first, but lastly into the direct track that enabled him fully to develop them, is a curious instance of his modesty of feeling, and of the methods which the human mind uses at once to deceive itself, and yet, in its very delusion, to make its way out of error into the path which Nature has marked out as its right one. He often incited me to attempt the writing a tragedy: he conceived that I possessed some dramatic talent, and he was always most earnest and energetic in his exhortations that I should cultivate any talent I possessed, to the utmost. I entertained a truer estimate of my powers; and above all (though at that time not exactly aware of the fact) I was far too young to have any chance of succeeding, even moderately, in a species of composition that requires a greater scope of experience in, and sympathy with, human passion than could then have fallen to my lot, —or than any perhaps, except Shelley, ever possessed, even at the age of twenty-six, at which he wrote *The Cenci*.

On the other hand, Shelley most erroneously conceived himself to be destitute of this talent. He believed that one of the first requisites was the capacity of forming and following-up a story or plot. He fancied himself to be defective

in this portion of imagination: it was that which gave him least pleasure in the writings of others, though he laid great store by it as the proper framework to support the sublimest efforts of poetry. He asserted that he was too metaphysical and abstract, too fond of the theoretical and the ideal, to succeed as a tragedian. It perhaps is not strange that I shared this opinion with himself; for he had hitherto shown no inclination for, nor given any specimen of his powers in framing and supporting the interest of a story, either in prose or verse. Once or twice, when he attempted such, he had speedily thrown it aside, as being even disagreeable to him as an occupation.

The subject he had suggested for a tragedy was Charles I: and he had written to me: 'Remember, remember Charles I. I have been already imagining how you would conduct some scenes. The second volume of *St. Leon* begins with this proud and true sentiment: "There is nothing which the human mind can conceive which it may not execute." Shakespeare was only a human being.' These words were written in 1818, while we were in Lombardy, when he little thought how soon a work of his own would prove a proud comment on the passage he quoted. When in Rome, in 1819, a friend put into our hands the old manuscript account of the story of the Cenci. We visited the Colonna and Doria palaces, where the portraits of Beatrice were to be found; and her beauty cast the reflection of its own grace over her appalling story. Shelley's imagination became strongly excited, and he urged the subject to me as one fitted for a tragedy. More than ever I felt my incompetence; but I entreated him to write it instead; and he began, and proceeded swiftly, urged on by intense sympathy with the sufferings of the human beings whose passions, so long cold in the tomb, he revived, and gifted with poetic language. This tragedy is the only one of his works that he communicated to me during its progress. We talked over the arrangement of the scenes together. I speedily saw the great mistake we had made, and triumphed in the discovery of the new talent brought to light from that mine of wealth (never, alas, through his untimely death, worked to its depths)—his richly gifted mind.

We suffered a severe affliction in Rome by the loss of our eldest child, who was of such beauty and promise as to cause him deservedly to be the idol of our hearts. We left the capital of the world, anxious for a time to escape a spot associated too intimately with his presence and loss¹. Some friends of ours were residing in the neighbourhood of Leghorn, and we took a small house, Villa Valsovano, about half-way between the town and Monte Nero, where we remained during the summer. Our villa was situated in the midst of a *podere*; the peasants sang as they worked beneath our windows, during the heats of a very hot season, and in the evening the water-wheel creaked as the process of irrigation went on, and the fireflies flashed from among the myrtle hedges: Nature was bright, sunshiny, and cheerful, or diversified by storms of a majestic terror, such as we had never before witnessed.

At the top of the house there was a sort of terrace. There is often such in

¹ Such feelings haunted him when, in *The Cenci*, he makes Beatrice speak to Cardinal Camillo of

'that fair blue-eyed child

Who was the lodestar of your life:'—

and say—

'All see, since his most swift and piteous death,
That day and night, and heaven and earth, and time,
And all the things hoped for or done therein
Are changed to you, through your exceeding grief.'

Italy, generally roofed: this one was very small, yet not only roofed but glazed. This Shelley made his study; it looked out on a wide prospect of fertile country, and commanded a view of the near sea. The storms that sometimes varied our day showed themselves most picturesquely as they were driven across the ocean; sometimes the dark lurid clouds dipped towards the waves, and became waterspouts that churned up the waters beneath, as they were chased onward and scattered by the tempest. At other times the dazzling sunlight and heat made it almost intolerable to every other; but Shelley basked in both, and his health and spirits revived under their influence. In this airy cell he wrote the principal part of *The Cenci*. He was making a study of Calderon at the time, reading his best tragedies with an accomplished lady living near us, to whom his letter from Leghorn was addressed during the following year. He admired Calderon, both for his poetry and his dramatic genius; but it shows his judgement and originality that, though greatly struck by his first acquaintance with the Spanish poet, none of his peculiarities crept into the composition of *The Cenci*; and there is no trace of his new studies, except in that passage to which he himself alludes as suggested by one in *El Purgatorio de San Patricio*.

Shelley wished *The Cenci* to be acted. He was not a playgoer, being of such fastidious taste that he was easily disgusted by the bad filling-up of the inferior parts. While preparing for our departure from England, however, he saw Miss O'Neil several times. She was then in the zenith of her glory; and Shelley was deeply moved by her impersonation of several parts, and by the graceful sweetness, the intense pathos, and sublime vehemence of passion she displayed. She was often in his thoughts as he wrote: and, when he had finished, he became anxious that his tragedy should be acted, and receive the advantage of having this accomplished actress to fill the part of the heroine. With this view he wrote the following letter to a friend in London:

'The object of the present letter is to ask a favour of you. I have written a tragedy on a story well known in Italy, and, in my conception, eminently dramatic. I have taken some pains to make my play fit for representation, and those who have already seen it judge favourably. It is written without any of the peculiar feelings and opinions which characterize my other compositions; I have attended simply to the impartial development of such characters as it is probable the persons represented really were, together with the greatest degree of popular effect to be produced by such a development. I send you a translation of the Italian MS. on which my play is founded; the chief circumstance of which I have touched very delicately; for my principal doubt as to whether it would succeed as an acting play hangs entirely on the question as to whether any such a thing as incest in this shape, however treated, would be admitted on the stage. I think, however, it will form no objection; considering, first, that the facts are matter of history, and, secondly, the peculiar delicacy with which I have treated it¹.

'I am exceedingly interested in the question of whether this attempt of mine will succeed or not. I am strongly inclined to the affirmative at present; founding my hopes on this—that, as a composition, it is certainly not inferior

¹ In speaking of his mode of treating this main incident, Shelley said that it might be remarked that, in the course of the play, he had never mentioned expressly Cenci's worst crime. Every one knew what it must be, but it was never imaged in words—the nearest allusion to it being that portion of Cenci's curse beginning—

'That, if she have a child,' etc.

to any of the modern plays that have been acted, with the exception of *Remorse*; that the interest of the plot is incredibly greater and more real; and that there is nothing beyond what the multitude are contented to believe that they can understand, either in imagery, opinion, or sentiment. I wish to preserve a complete incognito, and can trust to you that, whatever else you do, you will at least favour me on this point. Indeed, this is essential, deeply essential, to its success. After it had been acted, and successfully (could I hope for such a thing), I would own it if I pleased, and use the celebrity it might acquire to my own purposes.

'What I want you to do is to procure for me its presentation at Covent Garden. The principal character, Beatrice, is precisely fitted for Miss O'Neil, and it might even seem to have been written for her (God forbid that I should see her play it—it would tear my nerves to pieces); and in all respects it is fitted only for Covent Garden. The chief male character I confess I should be very unwilling that any one but Kean should play. That is impossible, and I must be contented with an inferior actor.'

The play was accordingly sent to Mr. Harris. He pronounced the subject to be so objectionable that he could not even submit the part to Miss O'Neil for perusal, but expressed his desire that the author would write a tragedy on some other subject, which he would gladly accept. Shelley printed a small edition at Leghorn, to ensure its correctness; as he was much annoyed by the many mistakes that crept into his text when distance prevented him from correcting the press.

Universal approbation soon stamped *The Cenci* as the best tragedy of modern times. Writing concerning it, Shelley said: 'I have been cautious to avoid the introducing faults of youthful composition; diffuseness, a profusion of inapplicable imagery, vagueness, generality, and, as Hamlet says, *words, words*.' There is nothing that is not purely dramatic throughout; and the character of Beatrice, proceeding, from vehement struggle, to horror, to deadly resolution, and lastly to the elevated dignity of calm suffering, joined to passionate tenderness and pathos, is touched with hues so vivid and so beautiful that the poet seems to have read intimately the secrets of the noble heart imaged in the lovely countenance of the unfortunate girl. The Fifth Act is a masterpiece. It is the finest thing he ever wrote, and may claim proud comparison not only with any contemporary, but preceding, poet. The varying feelings of Beatrice are expressed with passionate, heart-reaching eloquence. Every character has a voice that echoes truth in its tones. It is curious, to one acquainted with the written story, to mark the success with which the poet has inwoven the real incidents of the tragedy into his scenes, and yet, through the power of poetry, has obliterated all that would otherwise have shown too harsh or too hideous in the picture. His success was a double triumph; and often after he was earnestly entreated to write again in a style that commanded popular favour, while it was not less instinct with truth and genius. But the bent of his mind went the other way; and, even when employed on subjects whose interest depended on character and incident, he would start off in another direction, and leave the delineations of human passion, which he could depict in so able a manner, for fantastic creations of his fancy, or the expression of those opinions and sentiments, with regard to human nature and its destiny, a desire to diffuse which was the master passion of his soul.

THE MASK OF ANARCHY

WRITTEN ON THE OCCASION OF THE MASSACRE AT
MANCHESTER

[Composed at the Villa Valsovano near Leghorn—or possibly later, during Shelley's sojourn at Florence—in the autumn of 1819, shortly after the Peterloo riot at Manchester, August 16; edited with Preface by Leigh Hunt, and published under the poet's name by Edward Moxon, 1832 (Bradbury & Evans, printers). Two MSS. are extant: a transcript by Mrs. Shelley with Shelley's autograph corrections, known as the 'Hunt MS.'; and an earlier draft, not quite complete, in the poet's handwriting, presented by Mrs. Shelley to (Sir) John Bowring in 1826, and now in the possession of Mr. Thomas J. Wise (the 'Wise MS.'). Mrs. Shelley's copy was sent to Leigh Hunt in 1819 with a view to its publication in *The Examiner*; hence the name 'Hunt MS.' A facsimile of the Wise MS. was published by the Shelley Society in 1887. Sources of the text are (1) the Hunt MS.; (2) the Wise MS.; (3) the *editio princeps*, ed. Leigh Hunt, 1832; (4) Mrs. Shelley's two edd. (*Poetical Works*) of 1839. Of the two MSS. Mrs. Shelley's transcript is the later and more authoritative.]

I

As I lay asleep in Italy
There came a voice from over the
Sea,
And with great power it forth led
me
To walk in the visions of Poesy.

II

I met Murder on the way— 5
He had a mask like Castlereagh—
Very smooth he looked, yet grim;
Seven blood-hounds followed him:

III

All were fat; and well they might 10
Be in admirable plight,
For one by one, and two by two,
He tossed them human hearts to
chew
Which from his wide cloak he
drew.

IV

Next came Fraud, and he had on,
Like Eldon, an ermined gown; 15
His big tears, for he wept well,
Turned to mill-stones as they fell.

V

And the little children, who
Round his feet played to and fro,
Thinking every tear a gem, 20
Had their brains knocked out by
them.

VI

Clothed with the Bible, as with
light,
And the shadows of the night,
Like Sidmouth, next, Hypocrisy
On a crocodile rode by. 25

VII

And many more Destructions
played
In this ghastly masquerade,
All disguised, even to the eyes,
Like Bishops, lawyers, peers, or
spies.

VIII

Last came Anarchy: he rode 30
On a white horse, splashed with
blood;
He was pale even to the lips,
Like Death in the Apocalypse.

15 Like Eldon *Hunt MS.*; Like Lord Eldon *Wise MS.* ermined *Hunt MS.*, *Wise MS.*, ed. 1832; ermine edd. 1839. 23 shadows] shadow edd. 1839 only. 29 or] and *Wise MS. only.*

IX

And he wore a kingly crown;
 And in his grasp a sceptre shone;
 On his brow this mark I saw— 36
 'I AM GOD, AND KING, AND LAW!'

X

With a pace stately and fast,
 Over English land he passed,
 Trampling to a mire of blood 40
 The adoring multitude.

XI

And a mighty troop around,
 With their trampling shook the
 ground,
 Waving each a bloody sword,
 For the service of their Lord. 45

XII

And with glorious triumph, they
 Rode through England proud and
 gay,
 Drunk as with intoxication
 Of the wine of desolation.

XIII

O'er fields and towns, from sea to 50
 sea,
 Passed the Pageant swift and free,
 Tearing up, and trampling down;
 Till they came to London town.

XIV

And each dweller, panic-stricken,
 Felt his heart with terror sicken 55
 Hearing the tempestuous cry
 Of the triumph of Anarchy.

XV

For with pomp to meet him came,
 Clothed in arms like blood and
 flame,
 The hired murderers, who did sing
 'Thou art God, and Law, and
 King. 61

XVI

'We have waited, weak and lone
 For thy coming, Mighty One!
 Our purses are empty, our swords
 are cold,
 Give us glory, and blood, and gold.'

XVII

Lawyers and priests, a motley 66
 crowd,
 To the earth their pale brows
 bowed;
 Like a bad prayer not over loud,
 Whispering—'Thou art Law and
 God.'

XVIII

Then all cried with one accord, 70
 'Thou art King, and God, and
 Lord;
 Anarchy, to thee we bow,
 Be thy name made holy now!'

XIX

And Anarchy, the Skeleton,
 Bowed and grinned to every one, 75
 As well as if his education
 Had cost ten millions to the nation.

XX

For he knew the Palaces
 Of our Kings were rightly his;
 His the sceptre, crown, and globe,
 And the gold-inwoven robe. 81

XXI

So he sent his slaves before
 To seize upon the Bank and Tower,
 And was proceeding with intent 84
 To meet his pensioned Parliament

XXII

When one fled past, a maniac maid,
 And her name was Hope, she said:
 But she looked more like Despair,
 And she cried out in the air:

35 And in his grasp *Hunt MS.*, ed. 1832; In his hand *Wise MS.*, *Hunt MS.* cancelled, ed. 1839.
 36 On his] And on his ed. 1832 only.
 56 tempestuous] tremendous edd. 1839 only.
Wise MS. 71 God] Law edd. 1839 only.
 edd. 1832, 1839.

51 the *Hunt MS.*, ed. 1832; that *Wise MS.*
 58 For with pomp] For from . . . *Hunt MS.*,
 79 rightly *Wise MS.*; nightly *Hunt MS.*,

XXIII

'My father Time is weak and
gray⁹⁰
With waiting for a better day;
See how idiot-like he stands,
Fumbling with his palsied hands!

XXIV

'He has had child after child,
And the dust of death is piled
Over every one but me—
Misery, oh, Misery!'

XXV

Then she lay down in the street,
Right before the horses' feet,
Expecting, with a patient eye,¹⁰⁰
Murder, Fraud, and Anarchy.

XXVI

When between her and her foes
A mist, a light, an image rose,
Small at first, and weak, and frail
Like the vapour of a vale:¹⁰⁵

XXVII

Till as clouds grow on the blast,
Like tower-crowned giants striding
fast,
And glare with lightnings as they
fly,
And speak in thunder to the sky,

XXVIII

It grew—a Shape arrayed in
mail¹¹⁰
Brighter than the viper's scale,
And upborne on wings whose grain
Was as the light of sunny rain.

XXIX

On its helm, seen far away,
A planet, like the Morning's,
lay;¹¹⁵
And those plumes its light rained
through
Like a shower of crimson dew.

XXX

With step as soft as wind it passed
O'er the heads of men—so fast
That they knew the presence there,
And looked,—but all was empty
air.¹²¹

XXXI

As flowers beneath May's footstep
waken,
As stars from Night's loose hair are
shaken,
As waves arise when loud winds
call,
Thoughts sprung where'er that
step did fall.¹²⁵

XXXII

And the prostrate multitude
Looked—and ankle-deep in blood,
Hope, that maiden most serene,
Was walking with a quiet mien:

XXXIII

And Anarchy, the ghastly birth,¹³⁰
Lay dead earth upon the earth;
The Horse of Death tameless as
wind
Fled, and with his hoofs did grind
To dust the murderers thronged
behind.

XXXIV

A rushing light of clouds and
splendour,¹³⁵
A sense awakening and yet tender
Was heard and felt—and at its
close
These words of joy and fear arose

XXXV

As if their own indignant Earth
Which gave the sons of England
birth¹⁴⁰
Had felt their blood upon her
brow,
And shuddering with a mother's
throe

93 Fumbling] Trembling *edd.* 1839 only.
1832, 1839. 113 as] like *edd.* 1839 only.

121 but *Wise MS.*; and *Hunt MS.*, *edd.* 1832, 1839.

122 May's footstep *Wise MS.*, *Hunt MS.*; the footstep *ed.* 1832; May's footsteps *edd.* 1839.

132-4 omit *Wise MS.*

XXXVI

Had turnèd every drop of blood
By which her face had been be-
dewed
To an accent unwithstood,— 145
As if her heart had cried aloud:

XXXVII

'Men of England, heirs of Glory,
Heroes of unwritten story,
Nurslings of one mighty Mother,
Hopes of her, and one another; 150

XXXVIII

'Rise like Lions after slumber
In unvanquishable number,
Shake your chains to earth like
dew
Which in sleep had fallen on you—
Ye are many—they are few. 155

XXXIX

'What is Freedom?—ye can tell
That which slavery is, too well—
For its very name has grown
To an echo of your own.

XL

'Tis to work and have such pay 160
As just keeps life from day to day
In your limbs, as in a cell
For the tyrants' use to dwell,

XLI

'So that ye for them are made
Loom, and plough, and sword, and
spade, 165
With or without your own will
bent
To their defence and nourishment.

XLII

'Tis to see your children weak
With their mothers pine and peak,
When the winter winds are bleak,—
They are dying whilst I speak. 171

XLIII

'Tis to hunger for such diet
As the rich man in his riot
Casts to the fat dogs that lie
Surfeiting beneath his eye; 175

XLIV

'Tis to let the Ghost of Gold
Take from Toil a thousandfold
More than e'er its substance could
In the tyrannies of old.

XLV

'Paper coin—that forgery 180
Of the title-deeds, which ye
Hold to something of the worth
Of the inheritance of Earth.

XLVI

'Tis to be a slave in soul
And to hold no strong control 185
Over your own wills, but be
All that others make of ye.

XLVII

'And at length when ye complain
With a murmur weak and vain
'Tis to see the Tyrant's crew 190
Ride over your wives and you—
Blood is on the grass like dew.

XLVIII

'Then it is to feel revenge
Fiercely thirsting to exchange
Blood for blood—and wrong for
wrong— 195
Do not thus when ye are strong.

XLIX

'Birds find rest, in narrow nest
When weary of their wingèd quest;
Beasts find fare, in woody lair
When storm and snow are in the
air¹. 200

146 had cried *Hunt MS.*, edd. 1832, 1839; cried out *Wise MS.* 155 omit ed. 1832 only.
182 of] from *Wise MS.* only. 186 wills *Hunt MS.*, edd. 1832, 1839; will *Wise MS.*
198 their *Wise MS.*, *Hunt MS.*, edd. 1839; the ed. 1832.

¹ The following stanza is found in the *Wise MS.* and in edd. 1839, but is wanting in the
Hunt MS. and in ed. 1832:—

'Horses, oxen, have a home,
When from daily toil they come;

Household dogs, when the wind roars,
Find a home within warm doors.'

L

'Asses, swine, have litter spread
And with fitting food are fed;
All things have a home but one—
Thou, Oh, Englishman, hast none!

LI

'This is Slavery—savage men, 205
Or wild beasts within a den
Would endure not as ye do—
But such ills they never knew.

LII

'What art thou Freedom? O!
could slaves
Answer from their living graves 210
This demand—tyrants would flee
Like a dream's dim imagery:

LIII

'Thou art not, as impostors say,
A shadow soon to pass away,
A superstition, and a name 215
Echoing from the cave of Fame.

LIV

'For the labourer thou art bread,
And a comely table spread
From his daily labour come
In a neat and happy home. 220

LV

'Thou art clothes, and fire, and
food
For the trampled multitude—
No—in countries that are free
Such starvation cannot be
As in England now we see. 225

LVI

'To the rich thou art a check,
When his foot is on the neck
Of his victim, thou dost make
That he treads upon a snake.

LVII

'Thou art Justice—ne'er for gold
May thy righteous laws be sold 231

As laws are in England—thou
Shield'st alike the high and low.

LVIII

'Thou art Wisdom—Freemen
never 234
Dream that God will damn for ever
All who think those things untrue
Of which Priests make such ado.

LIX

'Thou art Peace—never by thee
Would blood and treasure wasted
be
As tyrants wasted them, when all
Leagued to quench thy flame in
Gaul. 241

LX

'What if English toil and blood
Was poured forth, even as a flood?
It availed, Oh, Liberty,
To dim, but not extinguish thee. 245

LXI

'Thou art Love—the rich have
kissed
Thy feet, and like him following
Christ,
Give their substance to the free
And through the rough world fol-
low thee,

LXII

'Or turn their wealth to arms, and
make 250
War for thy belovèd sake
On wealth, and war, and fraud—
whence they
Drew the power which is their
prey.

LXIII

'Science, Poetry, and Thought
Are thy lamps; they make the lot
Of the dwellers in a cot 256
So serene, they curse it not.

216 cave *Wise MS.*, *Hunt MS.*, *edd.* 1839; caves *ed.* 1832, *Hunt MS.* cancelled. 220 In
Wise MS., *edd.* 1832, 1839; To *Hunt MS.* 233 the *Hunt MS.*, *edd.* 1832, 1839; both *Wise*
MS. 234 Freemen *Wise MS.*, *Hunt MS.*, *edd.* 1839; Freedom *ed.* 1832. 235 Dream
Wise MS., *Hunt MS.*, *edd.* 1839; Dreams *ed.* 1832. damn] doom *edd.* 1839 only.
248 Give *Hunt MS.*, *ed.* 1832; Given *Wise MS.*, *Hunt MS.* cancelled, *edd.* 1839. 249 follow]
followed *edd.* 1839 only. 250 Or *Wise MS.*, *Hunt MS.*; Oh *edd.* 1832, 1839. 254 Science,
Poetry, *Wise MS.*, *Hunt MS.*; Science, and Poetry *edd.* 1832, 1839. 257 So *Hunt MS.*,
ed. 1832; Such they curse their Maker not *Wise MS.*, *edd.* 1839.

LXIV

'Spirit, Patience, Gentleness,
All that can adorn and bless
Art thou—let deeds, not words,
express 260
Thine exceeding loveliness.

LXV

'Let a great Assembly be
Of the fearless and the free
On some spot of English ground
Where the plains stretch wide
around. 265

LXVI

'Let the blue sky overhead,
The green earth on which ye tread,
All that must eternal be
Witness the solemnity.

LXVII

'From the corners uttermost 270
Of the bounds of English coast;
From every hut, village, and town
Where those who live and suffer
moan
For others' misery or their own¹,

LXVIII

'From the workhouse and the
prison 275
Where pale as corpses newly risen,
Women, children, young and old
Groan for pain, and weep for cold—

LXIX

'From the haunts of daily life
Where is waged the daily strife 280
With common wants and common
cares
Which sows the human heart with
tares—

LXX

'Lastly from the palaces
Where the murmur of distress
Echoes, like the distant sound 285
Of a wind alive around

263 and] of *ed. 1832 only.* 274 or] and *ed. 1832 only.* 282 sows *Wise MS., Hunt MS.;*
sow *edd. 1832, 1839.* 297 measured *Wise MS., Hunt MS., ed. 1832;* ne'er-said *edd. 1839.*

¹ The following stanza is found (cancelled) at this place in the *Wise MS.*:—

'From the cities where from caves,
Like the dead from putrid graves,

LXXI

'Those prison halls of wealth and
fashion,
Where some few feel such com-
passion
For those who groan, and toil, and
wail
As must make their brethren
pale— 290

LXXII

'Ye who suffer woes untold,
Or to feel, or to behold
Your lost country bought and sold
With a price of blood and gold—

LXXIII

'Let a vast assembly be, 295
And with great solemnity
Declare with measured words that
ye
Are, as God has made ye, free—

LXXIV

'Be your strong and simple words
Keen to wound as sharpened
swords, 300
And wide as targes let them be,
With their shade to cover ye.

LXXV

'Let the tyrants pour around
With a quick and startling sound,
Like the loosening of a sea, 305
Troops of armed emblazonry.

LXXVI

'Let the charged artillery drive
Till the dead air seems alive
With the clash of clanging wheels,
And the tramp of horses' heels. 310

LXXVII

'Let the fixèd bayonet
Gleam with sharp desire to wet
Its bright point in English blood
Looking keen as one for food.

Troops of starvelings gilding come,
Living Tenants of a tomb.

LXXVIII

'Let the horsemen's scimitars 315
Wheel and flash, like sphereless
stars
Thirsting to eclipse their burning
In a sea of death and mourning.

LXXIX

'Stand ye calm and resolute,
Like a forest close and mute, 320
With folded arms and looks which
are
Weapons of unvanquished war,

LXXX

'And let Panic, who outspeeds
The career of armèd steeds
Pass, a disregarded shade 325
Through your phalanx undis-
mayed.

LXXXI

'Let the laws of your own land,
Good or ill, between ye stand
Hand to hand, and foot to foot,
Arbiters of the dispute, 330

LXXXII

'The old laws of England—they
Whose reverend heads with age are
gray,
Children of a wiser day;
And whose solemn voice must be
Thine own echo—Liberty! 335

LXXXIII

'On those who first should violate
Such sacred heralds in their state
Rest the blood that must ensue,
And it will not rest on you.

LXXXIV

'And if then the tyrants dare 340
Let them ride among you there,
Slash, and stab, and maim, and
hew,—
What they like, that let them do.

LXXXV

'With folded arms and steady
eyes,
And little fear, and less surprise, 345
Look upon them as they slay
Till their rage has died away.

LXXXVI

'Then they will return with shame
To the place from which they came,
And the blood thus shed will speak
In hot blushes on their cheek. 351

LXXXVII

'Every woman in the land
Will point at them as they stand—
They will hardly dare to greet
Their acquaintance in the street. 355

LXXXVIII

'And the bold, true warriors
Who have hugged Danger in wars
Will turn to those who would be
free,
Ashamed of such base company.

LXXXIX

'And that slaughter to the Nation
Shall steam up like inspiration, 361
Eloquent, oracular;
A volcano heard afar.

XC

'And these words shall then be-
come
Like Oppression's thundered doom
Ringing through each heart and
brain, 366
Heard again—again—again—

XCI

'Rise like Lions after slumber
In unvanquishable number—
Shake your chains to earth like
dew 370
Which in sleep had fallen on you—
Ye are many—they are few.'

322 of unvanquished *Wise MS.*; of an unvanquished *Hunt MS.*, edd. 1832, 1839. 346 slay
Wise MS., *Hunt MS.*, edd. 1839; stay ed. 1832. 357 in wars *Wise MS.*, *Hunt MS.*, ed. 1832;
in the wars edd. 1839.

NOTE ON THE MASK OF ANARCHY, BY
MRS. SHELLEY

THOUGH Shelley's first eager desire to excite his countrymen to resist openly the oppressions existent during 'the good old times' had faded with early youth, still his warmest sympathies were for the people. He was a republican, and loved a democracy. He looked on all human beings as inheriting an equal right to possess the dearest privileges of our nature; the necessities of life when fairly earned by labour, and intellectual instruction. His hatred of any despotism that looked upon the people as not to be consulted, or protected from want and ignorance, was intense. He was residing near Leghorn, at Villa Valsovano, writing *The Cenci*, when the news of the Manchester Massacre reached us; it roused in him violent emotions of indignation and compassion. The great truth that the many, if accordant and resolute, could control the few, as was shown some years after, made him long to teach his injured countrymen how to resist. Inspired by these feelings, he wrote the *Mask of Anarchy*, which he sent to his friend Leigh Hunt, to be inserted in the *Examiner*, of which he was then the Editor.

'I did not insert it,' Leigh Hunt writes in his valuable and interesting preface to this poem, when he printed it in 1832, 'because I thought that the public at large had not become sufficiently discerning to do justice to the sincerity and kind-heartedness of the spirit that walked in this flaming robe of verse.' Days of outrage have passed away, and with them the exasperation that would cause such an appeal to the many to be injurious. Without being aware of them, they at one time acted on his suggestions, and gained the day. But they rose when human life was respected by the Minister in power; such was not the case during the Administration which excited Shelley's abhorrence.

The poem was written for the people, and is therefore in a more popular tone than usual: portions strike as abrupt and unpolished, but many stanzas are all his own. I heard him repeat, and admired, those beginning

'My Father Time is old and gray,'

before I knew to what poem they were to belong. But the most touching passage is that which describes the blessed effects of liberty; it might make a patriot of any man whose heart was not wholly closed against his humbler fellow-creatures.

PETER BELL THE THIRD

By MICHING MALLECHO, Esq.

Is it a party in a parlour, Crammed just as they on earth were crammed,	Some sipping punch—some sipping tea; But, as you by their faces see, All silent, and all—damned!
---	--

Peter Bell, by W. WORDSWORTH.

OPHELIA.—What means this, my lord?

HAMLET.—Marry, this is Miching Mallecho; it means mischief.

SHAKESPEARE.

[Composed at Florence, October, 1819, and forwarded to Hunt (Nov. 2) to be published by C. & J. Ollier without the author's name; ultimately printed by Mrs. Shelley in the second edition of the *Poetical Works*, 1839. A skit by John Hamilton Reynolds, *Peter Bell, a Lyrical Ballad*, had already appeared (April, 1819), a few days before the publication of Wordsworth's *Peter Bell, a Tale*. These productions were reviewed in Leigh Hunt's *Examiner* (April 26, May 3, 1819); and to the entertainment derived from his perusal of Hunt's criticisms the composition of Shelley's *Peter Bell the Third* is chiefly owing.]

DEDICATION

TO THOMAS BROWN, Esq., THE YOUNGER, H.F.

DEAR TOM—Allow me to request you to introduce Mr. Peter Bell to the respectable family of the Fudges. Although he may fall short of those very considerable personages in the more active properties which characterize the Rat and the Apostate, I suspect that even you, their historian, will confess that he surpasses them in the more peculiarly legitimate qualification of intolerable dulness.

You know Mr. Examiner Hunt; well—it was he who presented me to two of the Mr. Bells. My intimacy with the younger Mr. Bell naturally sprung from this introduction to his brothers. And in presenting him to you, I have the satisfaction of being able to assure you that he is considerably the dullest of the three.

There is this particular advantage in an acquaintance with any one of the Peter Bells, that if you know one Peter Bell, you know three Peter Bells; they are not one, but three; not three, but one. An awful mystery, which, after having caused torrents of blood, and having been hymned by groans enough to deafen the music of the spheres, is at length illustrated to the satisfaction of all parties in the theological world, by the nature of Mr. Peter Bell.

Peter is a polyhedric Peter, or a Peter with many sides. He changes colours like a chameleon, and his coat like a snake. He is a Proteus of a Peter. He was at first sublime, pathetic, impressive, profound; then dull; then prosy and dull; and now dull—oh so very dull! it is an ultra-legitimate dulness.

You will perceive that it is not necessary to consider Hell and the Devil as supernatural machinery. The whole scene of my epic is in 'this world which is'—so Peter informed us before his conversion to *White Obi*—

‘The world of all of us, *and where*
We find our happiness, or not at all.’

Let me observe that I have spent six or seven days in composing this sublime piece; the orb of my moonlike genius has made the fourth part of

its revolution round the dull earth which you inhabit, driving you mad, while it has retained its calmness and its splendour, and I have been fitting this its last phase 'to occupy a permanent station in the literature of my country.'

Your works, indeed, dear Tom, sell better; but mine are far superior. The public is no judge; posterity sets all to rights.

Allow me to observe that so much has been written of Peter Bell, that the present history can be considered only, like the *Iliad*, as a continuation of that series of cyclic poems, which have already been candidates for bestowing immortality upon, at the same time that they receive it from, his character and adventures. In this point of view I have violated no rule of syntax in beginning my composition with a conjunction; the full stop which closes the poem continued by me being, like the full stops at the end of the *Iliad* and *Odyssey*, a full stop of a very qualified import.

Hoping that the immortality which you have given to the Fudges, you will receive from them; and in the firm expectation, that when London shall be an habitation of bitterns; when St. Paul's and Westminster Abbey shall stand, shapeless and nameless ruins, in the midst of an unpeopled marsh; when the piers of Waterloo Bridge shall become the nuclei of islets of reeds and osiers, and cast the jagged shadows of their broken arches on the solitary stream, some transatlantic commentator will be weighing in the scales of some new and now unimagined system of criticism, the respective merits of the Bells and the Fudges, and their historians. I remain, dear Tom, yours sincerely,

MICHING MALLECHO.

December 1, 1819.

P.S.—Pray excuse the date of place; so soon as the profits of the publication come in, I mean to hire lodgings in a more respectable street.

PROLOGUE

PETER BELLS, one, two and three,
O'er the wide world wandering
be.—

First, the antenatal Peter,
Wrapped in weeds of the same
metre,

The so-long-predestined raiment 5
Clothed in which to walk his way
meant

The second Peter; whose ambition
Is to link the proposition,
As the mean of two extremes—
(This was learned from Aldric's
themes) 10

Shielding from the guilt of schism
The orthodoxal syllogism;
The First Peter—he who was
Like the shadow in the glass

Of the second, yet unripe, 15
His substantial antitype.—
Then came Peter Bell the Second,
Who henceforward must be
reckoned

The body of a double soul,
And that portion of the whole 20
Without which the rest would
seem

Ends of a disjointed dream.—
And the Third is he who has
O'er the grave been forced to pass
To the other side, which is,— 25
Go and try else,—just like this.

Peter Bell the First was Peter
Smugger, milder, softer, neater,
Like the soul before it is
Born from *that* world into *this*. 30

The next Peter Bell was he,
 Predevote, like you and me,
 To good or evil as may come;
 His was the severer doom,—
 For he was an evil Cotter, 35
 And a polygamic Potter.¹
 And the last is Peter Bell,
 Damned since our first parents fell,
 Damned eternally to Hell—
 Surely he deserves it well! 40

PART THE FIRST

DEATH

I

AND Peter Bell, when he had been
 With fresh-imported Hell-fire
 warmed,
 Grew serious—from his dress and
 mien
 'Twas very plainly to be seen
 Peter was quite reformed. 5

II

His eyes turned up, his mouth
 turned down;
 His accent caught a nasal twang;
 He oiled his hair²; there might be
 heard
 The grace of God in every word
 Which Peter said or sang. 10

III

But Peter now grew old, and had
 An ill no doctor could unravel;
 His torments almost drove him
 mad;—
 Some said it was a fever bad—
 Some swore it was the gravel. 15

IV

His holy friends then came about,
 And with long preaching and per-
 suasion

Convinced the patient that, with-
 out
 The smallest shadow of a doubt,
 He was predestined to damna-
 tion. 20

V

They said—'Thy name is Peter
 Bell;
 Thy skin is of a brimstone hue;
 Alive or dead—ay, sick or well—
 The one God made to rhyme with
 hell;
 The other, I think, rhymes with
 you.' 25

VI

Then Peter set up such a yell!—
 The nurse, who with some water
 gruel
 Was climbing up the stairs, as well
 As her old legs could climb them—
 fell,
 And broke them both—the fall
 was cruel.

VII

The Parson from the casement lept
 Into the lake of Windermere—
 And many an eel—though no
 adept
 In God's right reason for it—kept
 Gnawing his kidneys half a year.

VIII

And all the rest rushed through the
 door, 36
 And tumbled over one another,
 And broke their skulls.—Upon the
 floor
 Meanwhile sat Peter Bell, and
 swore,
 And cursed his father and his
 mother; 40

¹ The oldest scholiasts read—

A dodecagamic Potter.

This is at once more descriptive and more megalophonous,—but the alliteration of the text had captivated the vulgar ear of the herd of later commentators.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

² To those who have not duly appreciated the distinction between *Whale* and *Russia* oil, this attribute might rather seem to belong to the Dandy than the Evangelic. The effect, when to the windward, is indeed so similar, that it requires a subtle naturalist to discriminate the animals. They belong, however, to distinct genera.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

IX

And raved of God, and sin, and death,
 Blaspheming like an infidel;
 And said, that with his clenched teeth
 He'd seize the earth from underneath,
 And drag it with him down to hell. 45

X

As he was speaking came a spasm,
 And wrenched his gnashing teeth asunder;
 Like one who sees a strange phantasm
 He lay,—there was a silent chasm 49
 Between his upper jaw and under.

XI

And yellow death lay on his face;
 And a fixed smile that was not human
 Told, as I understand the case,
 That he was gone to the wrong place:—
 I heard all this from the old woman. 55

XII

Then there came down from Langdale Pike
 A cloud, with lightning, wind and hail;
 It swept over the mountains like
 An ocean,—and I heard it strike
 The woods and crags of Grasmere vale. 60

XIII

And I saw the black storm come
 Nearer, minute after minute;
 Its thunder made the cataracts dumb;
 With hiss, and clash, and hollow hum,
 It neared as if the Devil was in it.

XIV

The Devil *was* in it:—he had
 boughed 66
 Peter for half-a-crown; and when

The storm which bore him vanished, nought
 That in the house that storm had caught
 Was ever seen again. 70

XV

The gaping neighbours came next day—
 They found all vanished from the shore:
 The Bible, whence he used to pray,
 Half scorched under a hen-coop lay;
 Smashed glass—and nothing more! 75

PART THE SECOND

THE DEVIL

I

THE DEVIL, I safely can aver,
 Has neither hoof, nor tail, nor sting;
 Nor is he, as some sages swear,
 A spirit, neither here nor there,
 In nothing—yet in everything. 80

II

He is—what we are; for sometimes
 The Devil is a gentleman;
 At others a bard bartering rhymes
 For sack; a statesman spinning crimes;
 A swindler, living as he can; 85

III

A thief, who cometh in the night,
 With whole boots and net pantaloons,
 Like some one whom it were not right
 To mention;—or the luckless wight
 From whom he steals nine silver spoons. 90

IV

But in this case he did appear
 Like a slop-merchant from Wapping,
 And with smug face, and eye severe,
 On every side did perk and peer 94
 Till he saw Peter dead or napping.

V

He had on an upper Benjamin
 (For he was of the driving schism)
 In the which he wrapped his skin
 From the storm he travelled in,
 For fear of rheumatism. 100

VI

He called the ghost out of the
 corse ;—
 It was exceedingly like Peter,—
 Only its voice was hollow and
 hoarse—
 It had a queerish look of course—
 Its dress too was a little neater. 105

VII

The Devil knew not his name and
 lot ;
 Peter knew not that he was Bell :
 Each had an upper stream of
 thought,
 Which made all seem as it was
 not ;
 Fitting itself to all things well. 110

VIII

Peter thought he had parents dear,
 Brothers, sisters, cousins, cronies,
 In the fens of Lincolnshire ;
 He perhaps had found them there
 Had he gone and boldly shown
 his 115

IX

Solemn phiz in his own village ;
 Where he thought oft when a boy
 He'd clomb the orchard walls to
 pillage
 The produce of his neighbour's
 tillage,
 With marvellous pride and joy. 120

X

And the Devil thought he had,
 'Mid the misery and confusion
 Of an unjust war, just made
 A fortune by the gainful trade
 Of giving soldiers rations bad— 125
 The world is full of strange de-
 lusion—

XI

That he had a mansion planned
 In a square like Grosvenor
 Square,
 That he was aping fashion, and
 That he now came to Westmore-
 land 130
 To see what was romantic there.

XII

And all this, though quite ideal,—
 Ready at a breath to vanish,—
 Was a state not more unreal 134
 Than the peace he could not feel,
 Or the care he could not banish.

XIII

After a little conversation,
 The Devil told Peter, if he chose,
 He'd bring him to the world of
 fashion
 By giving him a situation 140
 In his own service—and new
 clothes.

XIV

And Peter bowed, quite pleased
 and proud,
 And after waiting some few days
 For a new livery—dirty yellow
 Turned up with black—the
 wretched fellow 145
 Was bowled to Hell in the Devil's
 chaise.

PART THE THIRD

HELL

I

HELL is a city much like London—
 A populous and a smoky city ;
 There are all sorts of people un-
 done,
 And there is little or no fun done ;
 Small justice shown, and still less
 pity. 151

II

There is a Castles, and a Canning,
 A Cobbett, and a Castlereagh ;
 All sorts of caitiff corpses planning
 All sorts of cozening for trepan-
 ning 155
 Corpses less corrupt than they.

III

There is a * * *, who has lost
 His wits, or sold them, none
 knows which;
 He walks about a double ghost,
 And though as thin as Fraud
 almost—¹⁶⁰
 Ever grows more grim and rich.

IV

There is a Chancery Court; a
 King;
 A manufacturing mob; a set
 Of thieves who by themselves are
 sent
 Similar thieves to represent; ¹⁶⁵
 An army; and a public debt.

V

Which last is a scheme of paper
 money,
 And means—being interpreted—
 'Bees, keep your wax—give us the
 honey,
 And we will plant, while skies are
 sunny, ¹⁷⁰
 Flowers, which in winter serve
 instead.'

VI

There is a great talk of revolution—
 And a great chance of despo-
 tism—
 German soldiers—camps—confu-
 sion—
 Tumults — lotteries — rage — de-
 lusion— ¹⁷⁵
 Gin—suicide—and methodism;

VII

Taxes too, on wine and bread,
 And meat, and beer, and tea, and
 cheese,

From which those patriots pure
 are fed, ¹⁷⁹
 Who gorge before they reel to bed
 The tenfold essence of all these.

VIII

There are mincing women, mew-
 ing,
 (Like cats, who *amant misère*¹.)
 Of their own virtue, and pursuing
 Their gentler sisters to that ruin,
 Without which—what were chas-
 tity? ² ¹⁸⁶

IX

Lawyers—judges—old hobnobbers
 Are there — bailiffs — chancel-
 lors—
 Bishops—great and little rob-
 bers—
 Rhymesters — pamphleteers —
 stock-jobbers— ¹⁹⁰
 Men of glory in the wars,—

X

Things whose trade is, over ladies
 To lean, and flirt, and stare, and
 simper,
 Till all that is divine in woman
 Grows cruel, courteous, smooth,
 inhuman, ¹⁹⁵
 Crucified 'twixt a smile and whim-
 per.

XI

Thrusting, toiling, wailing, moil-
 ing,
 Frowning, preaching — such a
 riot!
 Each with never-ceasing labour,
 Whilst he thinks he cheats his
 neighbour, ²⁰⁰
 Cheating his own heart of quiet.

¹ One of the attributes in Linnaeus's description of the Cat. To a similar cause the cater-
 wauling of more than one species of this genus is to be referred;—except, indeed, that the
 poor quadruped is compelled to quarrel with its own pleasures, whilst the biped is supposed
 only to quarrel with those of others.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

² What would this husk and excuse for a virtue be without its kernal prostitution, or the
 kernal prostitution without this husk of a virtue? I wonder the women of the town do not
 form an association, like the Society for the Suppression of Vice, for the support of what may
 be called the 'King, Church, and Constitution' of their order. But this subject is almost too
 horrible for a joke.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

XII

And all these meet at levees;—
 Dinners convivial and political;—
 Suppers of epic poets;—teas,
 Where small talk dies in agonies;—
 Breakfasts professional and critical;
206

XIII

Lunches and snacks so aldermanic
 That one would furnish forth ten
 dinners,
 Where reigns a Cretan-tongued
 panic,
 Lest news Russ, Dutch, or Ale-
 mannian 210
 Should make some losers, and
 some winners;—

XIV

At conversazioni—balls—
 Conventicles — and drawing-
 rooms—
 Courts of law—committees—calls
 Of a morning — clubs — book-
 stalls— 215
 Churches — masquerades — and
 tombs.

XV

And this is Hell—and in this
 smother
 All are damnable and damned;
 Each one damning, damns the
 other;
 They are damned by one an-
 other, 220
 By none other are they damned.

XVI

'Tis a lie to say, 'God damns!'
 Where was Heaven's Attorney
 General
 When they first gave out such
 flams?
 Let there be an end of shams, 225
 They are mines of poisonous
 mineral.

XVII

Statesmen damn themselves to be
 Cursed; and lawyers damn their
 souls
 To the auction of a fee;
 Churchmen damn themselves to
 see 230
 God's sweet love in burning coals.

XVIII

The rich are damned, beyond all
 cure,
 To taunt, and starve, and trample
 on
 The weak and wretched; and the
 poor
 Damn their broken hearts to
 endure 235
 Stripe on stripe, with groan on
 groan.

XIX

Sometimes the poor are damned
 indeed
 To take,—not means for being
 blessed,—
 But Cobbett's snuff, revenge; that
 weed
 From which the worms that it doth
 feed 240
 Squeeze less than they before
 possessed.

XX

And some few, like we know who,
 Damned—but God alone knows
 why— 243
 To believe their minds are given
 To make this ugly Hell a Heaven;
 In which faith they live and die.

XXI

Thus, as in a town, plague-stricken,
 Each man be he sound or no
 Must indifferently sicken;
 As when day begins to thicken, 250
 None knows a pigeon from a
 crow,—

¹ This libel on our national oath, and this accusation of all our countrymen of being in the daily practice of solemnly asseverating the most enormous falsehood, I fear deserves the notice of a more active Attorney General than that here alluded to.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

XXII

So good and bad, sane and mad,
 The oppressor and the oppressed;
 Those who weep to see what others
 Smile to inflict upon their brothers;
 Lovers, haters, worst and best; 256

XXIII

All are damned—they breathe an
 air,
 Thick, infected, joy-dispelling:
 Each pursues what seems most
 fair,
 Mining like moles, through mind,
 and there 260
 Scoop palace-caverns vast, where
 Care
 In thronèd state is ever dwelling.

PART THE FOURTH

SIN

I

Lo, Peter in Hell's Grosvenor
 Square,
 A footman in the Devil's service!
 And the misjudging world would
 swear 265
 That every man in service there
 To virtue would prefer vice.

II

But Peter, though now damned,
 was not
 What Peter was before damna-
 tion.
 Men oftentimes prepare a lot 270
 Which ere it finds them, is not
 what
 Suits with their genuine station.

III

All things that Peter saw and felt
 Had a peculiar aspect to him;
 And when they came within the
 belt 275
 Of his own nature, seemed to melt,
 Like cloud to cloud, into him.

IV

And so the outward world uniting
 To that within him, he became

Considerably uninviting 280
 To those who, meditation slighting,
 Were moulded in a different
 frame.

V

And he scorned them, and they
 scorned him;
 And he scorned all they did; and
 they
 Did all that men of their own trim
 Are wont to do to please their
 whim, 286
 Drinking, lying, swearing, play.

VI

Such were his fellow-servants; thus
 His virtue, like our own, was built
 Too much on that indignant fuss
 Hypocrite Pride stirs up in us 291
 To bully one another's guilt.

VII

He had a mind which was some-
 how
 At once circumference and centre
 Of all he might or feel or know; 295
 Nothing went ever out, although
 Something did ever enter.

VIII

He had as much imagination
 As a pint-pot;—he never could
 Fancy another situation, 300
 From which to dart his contem-
 plation,
 Than that wherein he stood.

IX

Yet his was individual mind,
 And new created all he saw
 In a new manner, and refined 305
 Those new creations, and com-
 bined
 Them, by a master-spirit's law.

X

Thus—though unimaginative—
 An apprehension clear, intense,
 Of his mind's work, had made alive
 The things it wrought on; I be-
 lieve 311
 Wakening a sort of thought in
 sense.

XI

But from the first 'twas Peter's
drift
To be a kind of moral eunuch,
He touched the hem of Nature's
shift, ³¹⁵
Felt faint—and never dared uplift
The closest, all-concealing tunic.

XII

She laughed the while, with an
arch smile,
And kissed him with a sister's
kiss,
And said—'My best Diogenes, ³²⁰
I love you well—but, if you please,
Tempt not again my deepest bliss.

XIII

'Tis you are cold—for I, not coy,
Yield love for love, frank, warm,
and true;
And Burns, a Scottish peasant
boy— ³²⁵
His errors prove it—knew my
joy
More, learnèd friend, than you.

XIV

'*Bocca bacciata non perde ventura,
Anzi rinnuova come fa la luna:—*
So thought Boccaccio, whose sweet
words might cure a ³³⁰
Male prude, like you, from what
you now endure, a
Low-tide in soul, like a stagnant
laguna.'

XV

Then Peter rubbed his eyes severe,
And smoothed his spacious fore-
head down
With his broad palm;—'twixt love
and fear, ³³⁵
He looked, as he no doubt felt,
queer,
And in his dream sate down.

XVI

The Devil was no uncommon
creature;
A leaden-witted thief—just hud-
dled

Out of the dross and scum of
nature; ³⁴⁰
A toad-like lump of limb and
feature,
With mind, and heart, and fancy
muddled.

XVII

He was that heavy, dull, cold
thing,
The spirit of evil well may be:
A drone too base to have a sting;
Who gluts, and grimes his lazy
wing, ³⁴⁶
And calls lust, luxury.

XVIII

Now he was quite the kind of
wight
Round whom collect, at a fixed
aera,
Venison, turtle, hock, and claret,—
Good cheer—and those who come
to share it— ³⁵¹
And best East Indian madeira!

XIX

It was his fancy to invite
Men of science, wit, and learning,
Who came to lend each other light;
He proudly thought that his gold's
might ³⁵⁶
Had set those spirits burning.

XX

And men of learning, science, wit,
Considered him as you and I
Think of some rotten tree, and sit
Lounging and dining under it, ³⁶¹
Exposed to the wide sky.

XXI

And all the while, with loose fat
smile,
The willing wretch sat winking
there,
Believing 'twas his power that
made ³⁶⁵
That jovial scene—and that all
paid
Homage to his unnoticed chair.

XXII

Though to be sure this place was
Hell;

He was the Devil—and all they—
What though the claret circled
well,

And wit, like ocean, rose and fell?—
Were damned eternally.

PART THE FIFTH

GRACE

I

AMONG the guests who often
stayed

Till the Devil's petits-soupers,
A man there came, fair as a
maid,

And Peter noted what he said,
Standing behind his master's
chair.

II

He was a mighty poet—and
A subtle-souled psychologist;
All things he seemed to under-
stand,
Of old or new—of sea or land—
But his own mind—which was
a mist.

III

This was a man who might have
turned
Hell into Heaven—and so in glad-
ness

A Heaven unto himself have
earned;

But he in shadows undiscerned
Trusted,—and damned himself to
madness.

IV

He spoke of poetry, and how
'Divine it was—a light—a love—
A spirit which like wind doth blow
As it listeth, to and fro;
A dew rained down from God
above;

V

'A power which comes and goes
like dream,
And which none can ever trace—

Heaven's light on earth—Truth's
brightest beam.'

And when he ceased there lay the
gleam

Of those words upon his face.

VI

Now Peter, when he heard such talk,
Would, heedless of a broken pate,
Stand like a man asleep, or balk
Some wishing guest of knife or fork,
Or drop and break his master's
plate.

VII

At night he oft would start and wake
Like a lover, and began
In a wild measure songs to make
On moor, and glen, and rocky lake,
And on the heart of man—

VIII

And on the universal sky—
And the wide earth's bosom
green,—
And the sweet, strange mystery
Of what beyond these things may
lie,
And yet remain unseen.

IX

For in his thought he visited
The spots in which, ere dead and
damned,
He his wayward life had led;
Yet knew not whence the thoughts
were fed
Which thus his fancy crammed.

X

And these obscure remembrances
Stirred such harmony in Peter,
That, whensoever he should please,
He could speak of rocks and trees
In poetic metre.

XI

For though it was without a sense
Of memory, yet he remembered
well
Many a ditch and quick-set fence;
Of lakes he had intelligence,
He knew something of heath and
fell.

XII

He had also dim recollections
Of pedlars tramping on their
rounds;
Milk-pans and pails; and odd col-
lections 430
Of saws, and proverbs; and reflec-
tions
Old parsons make in burying-
grounds.

XIII

But Peter's verse was clear, and
came
Announcing from the frozen
hearth
Of a cold age, that none might
tame 435
The soul of that diviner flame
It augured to the Earth:

XIV

Like gentle rains, on the dry
plains,
Making that green which late was
gray,
Or like the sudden moon, that
stains 440
Some gloomy chamber's window-
panes
With a broad light like day.

XV

For language was in Peter's hand
Like clay while he was yet a
potter;
And he made songs for all the
land, 445
Sweet both to feel and understand,
As pipkins late to mountain Cot-
ter.

XVI

And Mr.—, the bookseller,
Gave twenty pounds for some;—
then scorning
A footman's yellow coat to wear,
Peter, too proud of heart, I fear, 451
Instantly gave the Devil warning.

XVII

Whereat the Devil took offence,
And swore in his soul a great
oath then, 454

'That for his damned impertinence
He'd bring him to a proper sense
Of what was due to gentlemen!'

PART THE SIXTH

DAMNATION

I

'O THAT mine enemy had written
A book!'—cried Job:—a fearful
curse,
If to the Arab, as the Briton, 460
'Twas galling to be critic-bitten:—
The Devil to Peter wished no
worse.

II

When Peter's next new book
found vent,
The Devil to all the first Reviews
A copy of it slyly sent, 465
With five-pound note as compli-
ment,
And this short notice—'Pray
abuse.'

III

Then *seriatim*, month and quarter,
Appeared such mad tirades.—
One said—
'Peter seduced Mrs. Foy's daugh-
ter, 470
Then drowned the mother in Ulls-
water,
The last thing as he went to bed.'

IV

Another—'Let him shave his head!
Where's Dr. Willis?—Or is he
joking?
What does the rascal mean or
hope, 475
No longer imitating Pope,
In that barbarian Shakespeare
poking?'

V

One more, 'Is incest not enough?
And must there be adultery too?
Grace after meat? Miscreant and
Liar! 480
Thief! Blackguard! Scoundrel!
Fool! Hell-fire
Is twenty times too good for you.

VI

'By that last book of yours we
think
You've double damned yourself
to scorn;
We warned you whilst yet on the
brink 485
You stood. From your black name
will shrink
The babe that is unborn.'

VII

All these Reviews the Devil made
Up in a parcel, which he had 489
Safely to Peter's house conveyed.
For carriage, tenpence Peter paid—
Untied them—read them—went
half mad.

VIII

'What!' cried he, 'this is my re-
ward
For nights of thought, and days
of toil?
Do poets, but to be abhorred 495
By men of whom they never heard,
Consume their spirits' oil?

IX

'What have I done to them?—and
who
Is Mrs. Foy? 'Tis very cruel
To speak of me and Betty so! 500
Adultery! God defend me! Oh!
I've half a mind to fight a duel.

X

'Or,' cried he, a grave look collect-
ing,
'Is it my genius, like the moon,
Sets those who stand her face in-
specting, 505
That face within their brain re-
flecting,
Like a crazed bell-chime, out of
tune?'

XI

For Peter did not know the town,
But thought, as country readers
do,
For half a guinea or a crown, 510
He bought oblivion or renown
From God's own voice¹ in a re-
view.

XII

All Peter did on this occasion
Was, writing some sad stuff in
prose.
It is a dangerous invasion 515
When poets criticize; their station
Is to delight, not pose.

XIII

The Devil then sent to Leipsic fair
For Born's translation of Kant's
book;
A world of words, tail foremost,
where 520
Right—wrong—false—true—and
foul—and fair
As in a lottery-wheel are shook.

XIV

Five thousand crammed octavo
pages
Of German psychologies,—he
Who his *furor verborum* assuages
Thereon, deserves just seven
months' wages 526
More than will e'er be due to me.

XV

I looked on them nine several days,
And then I saw that they were
bad;
A friend, too, spoke in their dis-
praise,— 530
He never read them;—with amaze
I found Sir William Drummond
had.

500 Betty] Emma 1839, 2nd ed. See letter from Shelley to Ollier, May 14, 1820 (Shelley Memorials, p. 139).

¹ *Vox populi, vox dei*. As Mr. Godwin truly observes of a more famous saying, of some merit as a popular maxim, but totally destitute of philosophical accuracy.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

XVI

When the book came, the Devil
sent
It to P. Verbovale¹, Esquire,
With a brief note of compliment,
By that night's Carlisle mail. It
went, 536
And set his soul on fire.

XVII

Fire, which *ex luce praebens funum*,
Made him beyond the bottom
see
Of truth's clear well—when I and
you, Ma'am, 540
Go, as we shall do, *subter humum*,
We may know more than he.

XVIII

Now Peter ran to seed in soul
Into a walking paradox;
For he was neither part nor
whole, 545
Nor good, nor bad—nor knave nor
fool;
—Among the woods and rocks

XIX

Furious he rode, where late he ran,
Lashing and spurring his tame
hobby;
Turned to a formal puritan, 550
A solemn and unsexual man,—
He half believed *White Obi*.

XX

This steed in vision he would ride,
High trotting over nine-inch
bridges, 554
With Flibbertigibbet, imp of pride,
Mocking and mowing by his side—
A mad-brained goblin for a guide—
Over corn-fields, gates, and
hedges.

XXI

After these ghastly rides, he came
Home to his heart, and found
from thence 560
Much stolen of its accustomed
flame;
His thoughts grew weak, drowsy,
and lame
Of their intelligence.

XXII

To Peter's view, all seemed one
hue;
He was no Whig, he was no
Tory; 565
No Deist and no Christian he;—
He got so subtle, that to be
Nothing, was all his glory.

XXIII

One single point in his belief
From his organization sprung, 570
The heart-enrooted faith, the chief
Ear in his doctrines' blighted sheaf,
That 'Happiness is wrong';

XXIV

So thought Calvin and Dominic;
So think their fierce successors,
who 575
Even now would neither stint nor
stick
Our flesh from off our bones to
pick,
If they might 'do their do.'

XXV

His morals thus were under-
mined:—
The old Peter—the hard, old
Potter— 580
Was born anew within his mind;
He grew dull, harsh, sly, unrefined,
As when he tramped beside the
Otter².

¹ Quasi, *Qui valet verba*:—i.e. all the words which have been, are, or may be expended by, for, against, with, or on him. A sufficient proof of the utility of this history. Peter's progenitor who selected this name seems to have possessed a *pure anticipated cognition* of the nature and modesty of this ornament of his posterity.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

² A famous river in the new Atlantis of the Dynastophylic Pantisocratists.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

XXVI

In the death hues of agony
 Lambently flashing from a fish,
 Now Peter felt amused to see 586
 Shades like a rainbow's rise and
 flee,
 Mixed with a certain hungry
 wish¹.

XXVII

So in his Country's dying face
 He looked—and, lovely as she
 lay, 590
 Seeking in vain his last embrace,
 Wailing her own abandoned case,
 With hardened sneer he turned
 away:

XXVIII

And coolly to his own soul said;—
 'Do you not think that we might
 make 595
 A poem on her when she's dead:—
 Or, no—a thought is in my head—
 Her shroud for a new sheet I'll
 take:

XXIX

'My wife wants one.—Let who will
 bury
 This mangled corpse! And I and
 you, 600
 My dearest Soul, will then make
 merry,
 As the Prince Regent did with
 Sherry,—'
 'Ay—and at last desert me too.'

XXX

And so his Soul would not be gay,
 But moaned within him; like a
 fawn 605

Moaning within a cave, it lay
 Wounded and wasting, day by day,
 Till all its life of life was gone.

XXXI

As troubled skies stain waters
 clear,
 The storm in Peter's heart and
 mind 610
 Now made his verses dark and
 queer:
 They were the ghosts of what they
 were,
 Shaking dim grave-clothes in the
 wind.

XXXII

For he now raved enormous folly,
 Of Baptisms, Sunday-schools,
 and Graves, 615
 'Twould make George Colman
 melancholy
 To have heard him, like a male
 Molly,
 Chanting those stupid staves.

XXXIII

Yet the Reviews, who heaped abuse
 On Peter while he wrote for free-
 dom, 620
 So soon as in his song they spy
 The folly which soothes tyranny,
 Praise him, for those who feed
 'em.

XXXIV

'He was a man, too great to scan;—
 A planet lost in truth's keen
 rays:— 625
 His virtue, awful and prodigious;—
 He was the most sublime, re-
 ligious,
 Pure-minded Poet of these days.'

602-3 See Editor's Note.

¹ See the description of the beautiful colours produced during the agonizing death of a number of trout, in the fourth part of a long poem in blank verse, published within a few years. [*The Excursion*, VIII. ll. 568-71.—ED.] That poem contains curious evidence of the gradual hardening of a strong but circumscribed sensibility, of the perversion of a penetrating but panic-stricken understanding. The author might have derived a lesson which he had probably forgotten from these sweet and sublime verses:—

'This lesson, Shepherd, let us two divide,
 Taught both by what she* shows and what conceals,
 Never to blend our pleasure or our pride
 With sorrow of the meanest thing that feels.'—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

* Nature.

XXXV

As soon as he read that, cried Peter,
 'Eureka! I have found the way
 To make a better thing of metre ⁶³¹
 Than e'er was made by living
 creature
 Up to this blessed day.'

XXXVI

Then Peter wrote odes to the
 Devil;—
 In one of which he meekly said:
 'May Carnage and Slaughter, ⁶³⁶
 Thy niece and thy daughter,
 May Rapine and Famine,
 Thy gorge ever cramming,
 Glut thee with living and dead!

XXXVII

'May Death and Damnation, ⁶⁴¹
 And Consternation,
 Flit up from Hell with pure intent!
 Slash them at Manchester,
 Glasgow, Leeds, and Chester; ⁶⁴⁵
 Drench all with blood from Avon
 to Trent.

XXXVIII

'Let thy body-guard yeomen
 Hew down babes and women,
 And laugh with bold triumph till
 Heaven be rent!
 When Moloch in Jewry ⁶⁵⁰
 Munched children with fury,
 It was thou, Devil, dining with
 pure intent!'

PART THE SEVENTH

DOUBLE DAMNATION

I

THE Devil now knew his proper
 cue.—
 Soon as he read the ode, he
 drove

To his friend Lord MacMurder-
 chouse's, ⁶⁵⁵
 A man of interest in both houses,
 And said:—'For money or for
 love,

II

'Pray find some cure or sinecure;
 To feed from the superfluous
 taxes
 A friend of ours—a poet—fewer ⁶⁶⁰
 Have fluttered tamer to the lure
 Than he.' His lordship stands
 and racks his

III

Stupid brains, while one might
 count
 As many beads as he had
 boroughs,—
 At length replies; from his mean
 front, ⁶⁶⁵
 Like one who rubs out an account,
 Smoothing away the unmeaning
 furrows:

IV

'It happens fortunately, dear Sir,
 I can. I hope I need require
 No pledge from you, that he will
 stir, ⁶⁷⁰
 In our affairs;—like Oliver,
 That he'll be worthy of his hire.'

V

These words exchanged, the news
 sent off
 To Peter, home the Devil
 hied,—
 Took to his bed; he had no cough,
 No doctor,—meat and drink
 enough,— ⁶⁷⁶
 Yet that same night he died.

¹ It is curious to observe how often extremes meet. Cobbett and Peter use the same language for a different purpose: Peter is indeed a sort of metrical Cobbett. Cobbett is, however, more mischievous than Peter, because he pollutes a holy and now unconquerable cause with the principles of legitimate murder; whilst the other only makes a bad one ridiculous and odious.

If either Peter or Cobbett should see this note, each will feel more indignation at being compared to the other than at any censure implied in the moral perversion laid to their charge.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

VI

The Devil's corpse was leaded
down;

His decent heirs enjoyed his pelf,
Mourning-coaches, many a one, 680
Followed his hearse along the
town:—

Where was the Devil himself?

VII

When Peter heard of his promo-
tion,

His eyes grew like two stars for
bliss:

There was a bow of sleek devotion
Engendering in his back; each
motion 686

Seemed a Lord's shoe to kiss.

VIII

He hired a house, bought plate,
and made

A genteel drive up to his door,
With sifted gravel neatly laid,—
As if defying all who said, 691

Peter was ever poor.

IX

But a disease soon struck into

The very life and soul of Peter—
He walked about—slept—had the
hue 695

Of health upon his cheeks—and few
Dug better—none a heartier
eater.

X

And yet a strange and horrid curse
Clung upon Peter, night and day;
Month after month the thing grew
worse, 700

And deadlier than in this my verse
I can find strength to say.

XI

Peter was dull—he was at first

Dull—oh, so dull—so very dull!
Whether he talked, wrote, or re-
hearsed— 705

Still with this dulness was he
cursed—

Dull—beyond all conception—
dull.

XII

No one could read his books--no
mortal,

But a few natural friends, would
hear him;

The parson came not near his
portal; 710

His state was like that of the im-
mortal

Described by Swift—no man
could bear him.

XIII

His sister, wife, and children
yawned,

With a long, slow, and drear
ennui,

All human patience far beyond; 715

Their hopes of Heaven each would
have pawned,

Anywhere else to be.

XIV

But in his verse, and in his prose,

The essence of his dulness was
Concentred and compressed so
close, 720

'Twould have made Guatimozin
doze

On his red gridiron of brass.

XV

A printer's boy, folding those
pages,

Fell slumbrously upon one side;
Like those famed Seven who slept
three ages. 725

To wakeful frenzy's vigil-rages,

As opiates, were the same
applied.

XVI

Even the Reviewers who were
hired

To do the work of his reviewing,
With adamant nerves, grew
tired;— 730

Gaping and torpid they retired,

To dream of what they should be
doing.

XVII

And worse and worse, the drowsy
 curse
 Yawned in him, till it grew a
 pest—
 A wide contagious atmosphere, ⁷³⁵
 Creeping like cold through all
 things near;
 A power to infect and to infest.

XVIII

His servant-maids and dogs grew
 dull;
 His kittens, late a sportive elf;
 The woods and lakes, so beautiful,
 Of dim stupidity were full, ⁷⁴¹
 All grew dull as Peter's self.

XIX

The earth under his feet—the
 springs,
 Which lived within it a quick
 life, ⁷⁴⁴
 The air, the winds of many wings,
 That fan it with new murmurings,
 Were dead to their harmonious
 strife.

XX

The birds and beasts within the
 wood,
 The insects, and each creeping
 thing,
 Were now a silent multitude; ⁷⁵⁰
 Love's work was left unwrought—
 no brood
 Near Peter's house took wing.

XXI

And every neighbouring cottager
 Stupidly yawned upon the other:
 No jackass brayed; no little
 cur ⁷⁵⁵
 Cocked up his ears;—no man
 would stir
 To save a dying mother.

XXII

Yet all from that charmed dis-
 trict went
 But some half-idiot and half-
 knave,
 Who rather than pay any rent, ⁷⁶⁰
 Would live with marvellous con-
 tent,
 Over his father's grave.

XXIII

No bailiff dared within that space,
 For fear of the dull charm, to
 enter;
 A man would bear upon his face, ⁷⁶⁵
 For fifteen months in any case,
 The yawn of such a venture.

XXIV

Seven miles above—below—
 around—
 This pest of dulness holds its
 sway;
 A ghastly life without a sound; ⁷⁷⁰
 To Peter's soul the spell is bound—
 How should it ever pass away?

NOTE ON PETER BELL THE THIRD, BY MRS. SHELLEY

In this new edition I have added *Peter Bell the Third*. A critique on Wordsworth's *Peter Bell* reached us at Leghorn, which amused Shelley exceedingly, and suggested this poem.

I need scarcely observe that nothing personal to the author of *Peter Bell* is intended in this poem. No man ever admired Wordsworth's poetry more;—he read it perpetually, and taught others to appreciate its beauties. This poem is, like all others written by Shelley, ideal. He conceived the idealism of a poet—a man of lofty and creative genius—quitting the glorious calling of discovering and announcing the beautiful and good, to support and propagate ignorant prejudices and pernicious errors; imparting to the unenlightened, not that ardour for truth and spirit of toleration which Shelley looked on as

the sources of the moral improvement and happiness of mankind, but false and injurious opinions, that evil was good, and that ignorance and force were the best allies of purity and virtue. His idea was that a man gifted, even as transcendently as the author of *Peter Bell*, with the highest qualities of genius, must, if he fostered such errors, be infected with dullness. This poem was written as a warning—not as a narration of the reality. He was unacquainted personally with Wordsworth, or with Coleridge (to whom he alludes in the fifth part of the poem), and therefore, I repeat, his poem is purely ideal;—it contains something of criticism on the compositions of those great poets, but nothing injurious to the men themselves.

No poem contains more of Shelley's peculiar views with regard to the errors into which many of the wisest have fallen, and the pernicious effects of certain opinions on society. Much of it is beautifully written: and, though, like the burlesque drama of *Swellfoot*, it must be looked on as a plaything, it has so much merit and poetry—so much of *himself* in it—that it cannot fail to interest greatly, and by right belongs to the world for whose instruction and benefit it was written.

LETTER TO MARIA GISBORNE

[Composed during Shelley's occupation of the Gisbornes' house at Leghorn, July, 1820; published in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. Sources of the text are (1) a draft in Shelley's hand, 'partly illegible' (Forman), amongst the Boscombe MSS.; (2) a transcript by Mrs. Shelley; (3) the *editio princeps*, 1824; the text in *Poetical Works*, 1839, 1st and 2nd edd. Our text is that of Mrs. Shelley's transcript, modified by the Boscombe MS. Here, as elsewhere in this edition, the readings of the *editio princeps* are preserved in the footnotes.]

LEGHORN, July 1, 1820.

THE spider spreads her webs, whether she be
 In poet's tower, cellar, or barn, or tree;
 The silk-worm in the dark green mulberry leaves
 His winding sheet and cradle ever weaves;
 So I, a thing whom moralists call worm, 5
 Sit spinning still round this decaying form,
 From the fine threads of rare and subtle thought—
 No net of words in garish colours wrought
 To catch the idle buzzers of the day—
 But a soft cell, where when that fades away, 10
 Memory may clothe in wings my living name
 And feed it with the asphodels of fame,
 Which in those hearts which must remember me
 Grow, making love an immortality.

Whoever should behold me now, I wist, 15
 Would think I were a mighty mechanist,
 Bent with sublime Archimedean art

To breathe a soul into the iron heart
 Of some machine portentous, or strange gin,
 Which by the force of figured spells might win 20
 Its way over the sea, and sport therein;
 For round the walls are hung dread engines, such
 As Vulcan never wrought for Jove to clutch
 Ixion or the Titan:—or the quick
 Wit of that man of God, St. Dominic, 25
 To convince Atheist, Turk, or Heretic,
 Or those in philanthropic council met,
 Who thought to pay some interest for the debt
 They owed to Jesus Christ for their salvation,
 By giving a faint foretaste of damnation 30
 To Shakespeare, Sidney, Spenser, and the rest
 Who made our land an island of the blest,
 When lamp-like Spain, who now relumes her fire
 On Freedom's hearth, grew dim with Empire:—
 With thumbscrews, wheels, with tooth and spike and jag, 35
 Which fishers found under the utmost crag
 Of Cornwall and the storm-encompassed isles,
 Where to the sky the rude sea rarely smiles
 Unless in treacherous wrath, as on the morn
 When the exulting elements in scorn, 40
 Satiated with destroyed destruction, lay
 Sleeping in beauty on their mangled prey,
 As panthers sleep;—and other strange and dread
 Magical forms the brick floor overspread,—
 Proteus transformed to metal did not make 45
 More figures, or more strange; nor did he take
 Such shapes of unintelligible brass,
 Or heap himself in such a horrid mass
 Of tin and iron not to be understood;
 And forms of unimaginable wood, 50
 To puzzle Tubal Cain and all his brood:
 Great screws, and cones, and wheels, and groovèd blocks,
 The elements of what will stand the shocks
 Of wave and wind and time.—Upon the table
 More knacks and quips there be than I am able 55
 To catalogize in this verse of mine:—
 A pretty bowl of wood—not full of wine,
 But quicksilver; that dew which the gnomes drink
 When at their subterranean toil they swink,
 Pledging the demons of the earthquake, who 60
 Reply to them in lava—cry halloo!
 And call out to the cities o'er their head,—
 Roofs, towers, and shrines, the dying and the dead,

27 philanthropic *Bos. MS.*; philosophic *ed. 1824.* 29 so 1839, 2nd *ed.*; They owed
ed. 1824. 36 Which fishers *Bos. MS.*; Which fishes *ed. 1824*; With fishes *edd. 1839.*
 38 rarely *transcript*; seldom *edd. 1824, 1839.* 61 lava—cry] lava-cry *edd. 1824, 1839*
 63 towers *transcript*; towns *edd. 1824, 1839.*

Crash through the chinks of earth—and then all quaff
 Another rouse, and hold their sides and laugh. 65
 This quicksilver no gnome has drunk—within
 The walnut bowl it lies, veined and thin,
 In colour like the wake of light that stains
 The Tuscan deep, when from the moist moon rains
 The inmost shower of its white fire—the breeze 70
 Is still—blue Heaven smiles over the pale seas.
 And in this bowl of quicksilver—for I
 Yield to the impulse of an infancy
 Outlasting manhood—I have made to float
 A rude idealism of a paper boat:— 75
 A hollow screw with cogs—Henry will know
 The thing I mean and laugh at me,—if so
 He fears not I should do more mischief.—Next
 Lie bills and calculations much perplexed,
 With steam-boats, frigates, and machinery quaint 80
 Traced over them in blue and yellow paint.
 Then comes a range of mathematical
 Instruments, for plans nautical and statical;
 A heap of rosin, a queer broken glass
 With ink in it;—a china cup that was 85
 What it will never be again, I think,—
 A thing from which sweet lips were wont to drink
 The liquor doctors rail at—and which I
 Will quaff in spite of them—and when we die
 We'll toss up who died first of drinking tea, 90
 And cry out,—‘Heads or tails?’ where’er we be.
 Near that a dusty paint-box, some odd hooks,
 A half-burnt match, an ivory block, three books,
 Where conic sections, spherics, logarithms,
 To great Laplace, from Saunderson and Sims, 95
 Lie heaped in their harmonious disarray
 Of figures,—disentangle them who may.
 Baron de Tott’s Memoirs beside them lie,
 And some odd volumes of old chemistry.
 Near those a most inexplicable thing, 100
 With lead in the middle—I’m conjecturing
 How to make Henry understand; but no—
 I’ll leave, as Spenser says, with many mo,
 This secret in the pregnant womb of time,
 Too vast a matter for so weak a rhyme. 105

And here like some weird Archimage sit I,
 Plotting dark spells, and devilish enginery,
 The self-impelling steam-wheels of the mind

84 queer *Bos. MS.*; green *transcript*, *edd.* 1824, 1839. 92 odd hooks *transcript*;
 old books *edd.* 1839 (an evident misprint); old hooks *ed.* 1824. 93 A] *An ed.* 1824.
 100 those *transcript*; them *edd.* 1824, 1839. 101 lead *Bos. MS.*; least *transcript*, *edd.*
 1824, 1839.

Which pump up oaths from clergymen, and grind
 The gentle spirit of our meek reviews 110
 Into a powdery foam of salt abuse,
 Ruffling the ocean of their self-content;—
 I sit—and smile or sigh as is my bent,
 But not for them—Libeccio rushes round
 With an inconstant and an idle sound, 115
 I heed him more than them—the thunder-smoke
 Is gathering on the mountains, like a cloak
 Folded athwart their shoulders broad and bare;
 The ripe corn under the undulating air
 Undulates like an ocean;—and the vines 120
 Are trembling wide in all their trellised lines—
 The murmur of the awakening sea doth fill
 The empty pauses of the blast;—the hill
 Looks hoary through the white electric rain,
 And from the glens beyond, in sullen strain, 125
 The interrupted thunder howls; above
 One chasm of Heaven smiles, like the eye of Love
 On the unquiet world;—while such things are,
 How could one worth your friendship heed the war
 Of worms? the shriek of the world's carrion jays, 130
 Their censure, or their wonder, or their praise?

You are not here! the quaint witch Memory sees,
 In vacant chairs, your absent images,
 And points where once you sat, and now should be
 But are not.—I demand if ever we 135
 Shall meet as then we met;—and she replies,
 Veiling in awe her second-sighted eyes;
 'I know the past alone—but summon home
 My sister Hope,—she speaks of all to come.'
 But I, an old diviner, who knew well 140
 Every false verse of that sweet oracle,
 Turned to the sad enchantress once again,
 And sought a respite from my gentle pain,
 In citing every passage o'er and o'er
 Of our communion—how on the sea-shore 145
 We watched the ocean and the sky together,
 Under the roof of blue Italian weather;
 How I ran home through last year's thunder-storm,
 And felt the transverse lightning linger warm
 Upon my cheek—and how we often made 150
 Feasts for each other, where good will outweighed
 The frugal luxury of our country cheer,
 As well it might, were it less firm and clear
 Than ours must ever be;—and how we spun

127 eye *Bos. MS., transcript, edd. 1839; age ed. 1824.* 140 knew *Bos. MS.; know transcript, edd. 1824, 1839.* 144 citing *Bos. MS.; acting transcript, edd. 1824, 1839.*
 151 Feasts *transcript; Treats edd. 1824, 1839.* 153 As well it] As it well *edd. 1824, 1839.*

A shroud of talk to hide us from the sun 155
 Of this familiar life, which seems to be
 But is not:—or is but quaint mockery
 Of all we would believe, and sadly blame
 The jarring and inexplicable frame
 Of this wrong world:—and then anatomize 160
 The purposes and thoughts of men whose eyes
 Were closed in distant years;—or widely guess
 The issue of the earth's great business,
 When we shall be as we no longer are—
 Like babbling gossips safe, who hear the war 165
 Of winds, and sigh, but tremble not;—or how
 You listened to some interrupted flow
 Of visionary rhyme,—in joy and pain
 Struck from the inmost fountains of my brain,
 With little skill perhaps;—or how we sought 170
 Those deepest wells of passion or of thought
 Wrought by wise poets in the waste of years,
 Staining their sacred waters with our tears;
 Quenching a thirst ever to be renewed!
 Or how I, wisest lady! then endued 175
 The language of a land which now is free,
 And, winged with thoughts of truth and majesty,
 Flits round the tyrant's sceptre like a cloud,
 And bursts the peopled prisons, and cries aloud,
 'My name is Legion!'—that majestic tongue 180
 Which Calderon over the desert flung
 Of ages and of nations; and which found
 An echo in our hearts, and with the sound
 Startled oblivion;—thou wert then to me
 As is a nurse—when inarticulately 185
 A child would talk as its grown parents do.
 If living winds the rapid clouds pursue,
 If hawks chase doves through the aethereal way,
 Huntsmen the innocent deer, and beasts their prey,
 Why should not we rouse with the spirit's blast 190
 Out of the forest of the pathless past
 These recollected pleasures?

You are now
 In London, that great sea, whose ebb and flow
 At once is deaf and loud, and on the shore
 Vomits its wrecks, and still howls on for more. 195
 Yet in its depth what treasures! You will see
 That which was Godwin,—greater none than he
 Though fallen—and fallen on evil times—to stand
 Among the spirits of our age and land,
 Before the dread tribunal of *to come* 200
 The foremost,—while Rebuke cowers pale and dumb.

158 believe, and] believe; or *edd.* 1824, 1839.
 188 aethereal *transcript*; æreal *edd.* 1824, 1839.

173 their *transcript*; the *edd.* 1824, 1839.
 197–201 See notes at end.

You will see Coleridge—he who sits obscure
 In the exceeding lustre and the pure
 Intense irradiation of a mind,
 Which, with its own internal lightning blind, 205
 Flags wearily through darkness and despair—
 A cloud-encircled meteor of the air,
 A hooded eagle among blinking owls.—
 You will see Hunt—one of those happy souls
 Which are the salt of the earth, and without whom 210
 This world would smell like what it is—a tomb;
 Who is, what others seem; his room no doubt
 Is still adorned with many a cast from Shout,
 With graceful flowers tastefully placed about;
 And coronals of bay from ribbons hung, 215
 And brighter wreaths in neat disorder flung;
 The gifts of the most learned among some dozens
 Of female friends, sisters-in-law, and cousins.
 And there is he with his eternal puns,
 Which beat the dullest brain for smiles, like duns 220
 Thundering for money at a poet's door;
 Alas! it is no use to say, 'I'm poor!'
 Or oft in graver mood, when he will look
 Things wiser than were ever read in book,
 Except in Shakespeare's wisest tenderness.— 225
 You will see Hogg,—and I cannot express
 His virtues,—though I know that they are great,
 Because he locks, then barricades the gate
 Within which they inhabit;—of his wit
 And wisdom, you'll cry out when you are bit. 230
 He is a pearl within an oyster shell,
 One of the richest of the deep;—and there
 Is English Peacock, with his mountain Fair,
 Turned into a Flamingo;—that shy bird
 That gleams i' the Indian air—have you not heard 235
 When a man marries, dies, or turns Hindoo,
 His best friends hear no more of him?—but you
 Will see him, and will like him too, I hope,
 With the milk-white Snowdonian Antelope
 Matched with this cameleopard—his fine wit 240
 Makes such a wound, the knife is lost in it;
 A strain too learned for a shallow age,
 Too wise for selfish bigots; let his page,
 Which charms the chosen spirits of the time,
 Fold itself up for the serener clime 245
 Of years to come, and find its recompense
 In that just expectation.—Wit and sense,

202 Coleridge] C—*ed.* 1824. *So too* H—*t* l. 209; H—*l.* 226; P—*l.* 233; H.S. l. 250;
 H—*and* — *l.* 296. 205 lightning Bos. MS., *transcript*; lustre *edd.* 1824, 1839.
 224 read Bos. MS.; said *transcript*, *edd.* 1824, 1839. 244 time Bos. MS., *transcript*; age
edd. 1824, 1839. 245 the *transcript*; a *edd.* 1824, 1839.

Virtue and human knowledge; all that might
 Make this dull world a business of delight,
 Are all combined in Horace Smith.—And these, 250
 With some exceptions, which I need not tease
 Your patience by descanting on,—are all
 You and I know in London.

I recall
 My thoughts, and bid you look upon the night.
 As water does a sponge, so the moonlight 255
 Fills the void, hollow, universal air—
 What see you?—unpavilioned Heaven is fair,
 Whether the moon, into her chamber gone,
 Leaves midnight to the golden stars, or wan
 Climbs with diminished beams the azure steep; 260
 Or whether clouds sail o'er the inverse deep,
 Piloted by the many-wandering blast,
 And the rare stars rush through them dim and fast:—
 All this is beautiful in every land.—
 But what see you beside?—a shabby stand 265
 Of Hackney coaches—a brick house or wall
 Fencing some lonely court, white with the scrawl
 Of our unhappy politics;—or worse—
 A wretched woman reeling by, whose curse
 Mixed with the watchman's, partner of her trade, 270
 You must accept in place of serenade—
 Or yellow-haired Pollonia murmuring
 To Henry, some unutterable thing.
 I see a chaos of green leaves and fruit
 Built round dark caverns, even to the root 275
 Of the living stems that feed them—in whose bowers
 There sleep in their dark dew the folded flowers;
 Beyond, the surface of the unsickled corn
 Trembles not in the slumbering air, and borne
 In circles quaint, and ever-changing dance, 280
 Like wingèd stars the fire-flies flash and glance,
 Pale in the open moonshine, but each one
 Under the dark trees seems a little sun,
 A meteor tamed; a fixed star gone astray
 From the silver regions of the milky way;— 285
 Afar the Contadino's song is heard,
 Rude, but made sweet by distance—and a bird
 Which cannot be the Nightingale, and yet
 I know none else that sings so sweet as it
 At this late hour;—and then all is still— 290
 Now—Italy or London, which you will!

Next winter you must pass with me; I'll have
 My house by that time turned into a grave

272, 273 found in the 2nd ed. of *P. W.*, 1839; wanting in transcript, ed. 1824 and 1839, 1st ed.
 276 that transcript; who edd. 1824, 1839. 288 the transcript; a edd. 1824, 1839.

Of dead despondence and low-thoughted care,
 And all the dreams which our tormentors are; 295
 Oh! that Hunt, Hogg, Peacock, and Smith were there,
 With everything belonging to them fair!—
 We will have books, Spanish, Italian, Greek;
 And ask one week to make another week
 As like his father, as I'm unlike mine, 300
 Which is not his fault, as you may divine.
 Though we eat little flesh and drink no wine,
 Yet let's be merry: we'll have tea and toast;
 Custards for supper, and an endless host
 Of syllabubs and jellies and mince-pies, 305
 And other such lady-like luxuries,—
 Feasting on which we will philosophize!
 And we'll have fires out of the Grand Duke's wood,
 To thaw the six weeks' winter in our blood.
 And then we'll talk;—what shall we talk about? 310
 Oh! there are themes enough for many a bout
 Of thought-entangled descant;—as to nerves—
 With cones and parallelograms and curves
 I've sworn to strangle them if once they dare
 To bother me—when you are with me there. 315
 And they shall never more sip laudanum,
 From Helicon or Himeros¹;—well, come,
 And in despite of God and of the devil,
 We'll make our friendly philosophic revel
 Outlast the leafless time; till buds and flowers 320
 Warn the obscure inevitable hours,
 Sweet meeting by sad parting to renew;—
 'To-morrow to fresh woods and pastures new.'

296 See notes at end. 299, 300 So 1839, 2nd ed.; wanting in edd. 1824, 1839, 1st.
 301 So transcript; wanting in edd. 1824, 1839. 317 well, come 1839, 2nd ed.; we'll
 come edd. 1824, 1839, 1st. 318 despite of God] transcript; despite of... ed. 1824; spite
 of... edd. 1839.

¹ *Ιμερος, from which the river Himera was named, is, with some slight shade of difference,
 a synonym of Love.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

THE WITCH OF ATLAS

[Composed at the Baths of San Giuliano, near Pisa, August 14-16, 1820; published in *Posthumous Poems*, ed. Mrs. Shelley, 1824. The dedication *To Mary* first appeared in the *Poetical Works*, 1839, 1st ed. Sources of the text are (1) the *editio princeps*, 1824; (2) edd. 1839 (which agree, and, save in two instances, follow ed. 1824); (3) an early and incomplete MS. in Shelley's handwriting (now at the Bodleian, here, as throughout, cited as *B.*), carefully collated by Mr. C. D. Locock, who printed the results in his *Examination of the Shelley MSS.*, etc., Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1903; (4) a later, yet intermediate, transcript by Mrs. Shelley, the variations of which are noted by Mr. H. Buxton Forman. The original text is modified in many places by variants from the MSS., but the readings of ed. 1824 are, in every instance, given in the footnotes.]

TO MARY

(ON HER OBJECTING TO THE FOLLOWING POEM, UPON THE SCORE OF ITS
CONTAINING NO HUMAN INTEREST)

I

How, my dear Mary,—are you critic-bitten
 (For vipers kill, though dead) by some review,
 That you condemn these verses I have written,
 Because they tell no story, false or true?
 What, though no mice are caught by a young kitten, 5
 May it not leap and play as grown cats do,
 Till its claws come? Prithee, for this one time,
 Content thee with a visionary rhyme.

II

What hand would crush the silken-wingèd fly,
 The youngest of inconstant April's minions, 10
 Because it cannot climb the purest sky,
 Where the swan sings, amid the sun's dominions?
 Not thine. Thou knowest 'tis its doom to die,
 When Day shall hide within her twilight pinions
 The lucent eyes, and the eternal smile, 15
 Serene as thine, which lent it life awhile.

III

To thy fair feet a wingèd Vision came,
 Whose date should have been longer than a day,
 And o'er thy head did beat its wings for fame,
 And in thy sight its fading plumes display; 20
 The watery bow burned in the evening flame,
 But the shower fell, the swift Sun went his way—
 And that is dead.—O, let me not believe
 That anything of mine is fit to live!

IV

Wordsworth informs us he was nineteen years 25
 Considering and retouching Peter Bell;
 Watering his laurels with the killing tears
 Of slow, dull care, so that their roots to Hell
 Might pierce, and their wide branches blot the spheres
 Of Heaven, with dewy leaves and flowers; this well 30
 May be, for Heaven and Earth conspire to foil
 The over-busy gardener's blundering toil.

V

My Witch indeed is not so sweet a creature
 As Ruth or Lucy, whom his graceful praise
 Clothes for our grandsons—but she matches Peter, 35
 Though he took nineteen years, and she three days
 In dressing. Light the vest of flowing metre
 She wears; he, proud as dandy with his stays,
 Has hung upon his wiry limbs a dress
 Like King Lear's 'looped and windowed raggedness.' 40

VI

If you strip Peter, you will see a fellow
 Scorched by Hell's hyperequatorial climate
 Into a kind of a sulphureous yellow:
 A lean mark, hardly fit to fling a rhyme at;
 In shape a Scaramouch, in hue Othello. 45
 If you unveil my Witch, no priest nor primate
 Can shrive you of that sin,—if sin there be
 In love, when it becomes idolatry.

THE WITCH OF ATLAS

I

BEFORE those cruel Twins, whom at one birth
 Incestuous Change bore to her father Time, 50
 Error and Truth, had hunted from the Earth
 All those bright natures which adorned its prime,
 And left us nothing to believe in, worth
 The pains of putting into learnèd rhyme,
 A lady-witch there lived on Atlas' mountain 55
 Within a cavern, by a secret fountain.

II

Her mother was one of the Atlantides:
 The all-beholding Sun had ne'er beholden
 In his wide voyage o'er continents and seas
 So fair a creature, as she lay enfolden 60
 In the warm shadow of her loveliness;—
 He kissed her with his beams, and made all golden
 The chamber of gray rock in which she lay—
 She, in that dream of joy, dissolved away.

III

'Tis said, she first was changed into a vapour, 65
 And then into a cloud, such clouds as flit,
 Like splendour-wingèd moths about a taper,
 Round the red west when the sun dies in it:
 And then into a meteor, such as caper
 On hill-tops when the moon is in a fit: 70
 Then, into one of those mysterious stars
 Which hide themselves between the Earth and Mars.

IV

Ten times the Mother of the Months had bent
 Her bow beside the folding-star, and bidden
 With that bright sign the billows to indent 75
 The sea-deserted sand—like children chidden,
 At her command they ever came and went—
 Since in that cave a dewy splendour hidden
 Took shape and motion: with the living form
 Of this embodied Power, the cave grew warm. 80

V

A lovely lady garmented in light
 From her own beauty—deep her eyes, as are
 Two openings of unfathomable night
 Seen through a Temple's cloven roof—her hair 85
 Dark—the dim brain whirls dizzy with delight,
 Picturing her form; her soft smiles shone afar,
 And her low voice was heard like love, and drew
 All living things towards this wonder new.

VI

And first the spotted cameleopard came,
 And then the wise and fearless elephant; 90
 Then the sly serpent, in the golden flame
 Of his own volumes interwolved;—all gaunt
 And sanguine beasts her gentle looks made tame.
 They drank before her at her sacred fount;
 And every beast of beating heart grew bold, 95
 Such gentleness and power even to behold.

VII

The brinded lioness led forth her young,
 That she might teach them how they should forego
 Their inborn thirst of death; the pard unstrung
 His sinews at her feet, and sought to know 100
 With looks whose motions spoke without a tongue
 How he might be as gentle as the doe.
 The magic circle of her voice and eyes
 All savage natures did imparadise.

65 first was transcript, B.; was first ed. 1824.
 ed. 1824.

84 Temple's transcript, B.; tempest's

VIII

And old Silenus, shaking a green stick 105
 Of lilies, and the wood-gods in a crew
 Came, blithe, as in the olive copses thick
 Cicadae are, drunk with the noonday dew:
 And Dryope and Faunus followed quick,
 Teasing the God to sing them something new; 110
 Till in this cave they found the lady lone,
 Sitting upon a seat of emerald stone.

IX

And universal Pan, 'tis said, was there,
 And though none saw him,—through the adamant 115
 Of the deep mountains, through the trackless air,
 And through those living spirits, like a want,
 He passed out of his everlasting lair
 Where the quick heart of the great world doth pant,
 And felt that wondrous lady all alone,—
 And she felt him, upon her emerald throne. 120

X

And every nymph of stream and spreading tree,
 And every shepherdess of Ocean's flocks,
 Who drives her white waves over the green sea,
 And Ocean with the brine on his gray locks,
 And quaint Priapus with his company, 125
 All came, much wondering how the enwombèd rocks
 Could have brought forth so beautiful a birth;—
 Her love subdued their wonder and their mirth.

XI

The herdsmen and the mountain maidens came,
 And the rude kings of pastoral Garamant— 130
 Their spirits shook within them, as a flame
 Stirred by the air under a cavern gaunt:
 Pigmies, and Polyphemes, by many a name,
 Centaurs, and Satyrs, and such shapes as haunt
 Wet clefts,—and lumps neither alive nor dead, 135
 Dog-headed, bosom-eyed, and bird-footed.

XII

For she was beautiful—her beauty made
 The bright world dim, and everything beside
 Seemed like the fleeting image of a shade:
 No thought of living spirit could abide, 140
 Which to her looks had ever been betrayed,
 On any object in the world so wide,
 On any hope within the circling skies,
 But on her form, and in her inmost eyes.

XIII

Which when the lady knew, she took her spindle 145
 And twined three threads of fleecy mist, and three
 Long lines of light, such as the dawn may kindle
 The clouds and waves and mountains with; and she
 As many star-beams, ere their lamps could dwindle
 In the belated moon, wound skilfully; 150
 And with these threads a subtle veil she wove—
 A shadow for the splendour of her love.

XIV

The deep recesses of her odorous dwelling
 Were stored with magic treasures—sounds of air,
 Which had the power all spirits of compelling, 155
 Folded in cells of crystal silence there;
 Such as we hear in youth, and think the feeling
 Will never die—yet ere we are aware,
 The feeling and the sound are fled and gone,
 And the regret they leave remains alone. 160

XV

And there lay Visions swift, and sweet, and quaint,
 Each in its thin sheath, like a chrysalis,
 Some eager to burst forth, some weak and faint
 With the soft burthen of intensest bliss.
 It was its work to bear to many a saint 165
 Whose heart adores the shrine which holiest is,
 Even Love's:—and others white, green, gray, and black,
 And of all shapes—and each was at her beck.

XVI

And odours in a kind of aviary
 Of ever-blooming Eden-trees she kept, 170
 Clipped in a floating net, a love-sick Fairy
 Had woven from dew-beams while the moon yet slept;
 As bats at the wired window of a dairy,
 They beat their vans; and each was an adept,
 When loosed and missioned, making wings of winds, 175
 To stir sweet thoughts or sad, in destined minds.

XVII

And liquors clear and sweet, whose healthful might
 Could medicine the sick soul to happy sleep,
 And change eternal death into a night
 Of glorious dreams—or if eyes needs must weep, 180
 Could make their tears all wonder and delight,
 She in her crystal vials did closely keep:
 If men could drink of those clear vials, 'tis said
 The living were not envied of the dead.

165 was its transcript, B.; is its ed. 1824
 James Thomson ('B. V.').

184 envied so all MSS. and edd.; envious cf.

XVIII

Her cave was stored with scrolls of strange device, 185
 The works of some Saturnian Archimage,
 Which taught the expiations at whose price
 Men from the Gods might win that happy age
 Too lightly lost, redeeming native vice;
 And which might quench the Earth-consuming rage 190
 Of gold and blood—till men should live and move
 Harmonious as the sacred stars above;

XIX

And how all things that seem untameable,
 Not to be checked and not to be confined,
 Obey the spells of Wisdom's wizard skill; 195
 Time, earth, and fire—the ocean and the wind,
 And all their shapes—and man's imperial will;
 And other scrolls whose writings did unbind
 The inmost lore of Love—let the profane
 Tremble to ask what secrets they contain. 200

XX

And wondrous works of substances unknown,
 To which the enchantment of her father's power
 Had changed those ragged blocks of savage stone,
 Were heaped in the recesses of her bower; 205
 Carved lamps and chalices, and vials which shone
 In their own golden beams—each like a flower,
 Out of whose depth a fire-fly shakes his light
 Under a cypress in a starless night.

XXI

At first she lived alone in this wild home,
 And her own thoughts were each a minister, 210
 Clothing themselves, or with the ocean foam,
 Or with the wind, or with the speed of fire,
 To work whatever purposes might come
 Into her mind; such power her mighty Sire
 Had girt them with, whether to fly or run, 215
 Through all the regions which he shines upon.

XXII

The Ocean-nymphs and Hamadryades,
 Oreads and Naiads, with long weedy locks,
 Offered to do her bidding through the seas,
 Under the earth, and in the hollow rocks, 220
 And far beneath the matted roots of trees,
 And in the gnarlèd heart of stubborn oaks,
 So they might live for ever in the light
 Of her sweet presence—each a satellite.

XXIII

'This may not be,' the wizard maid replied;
 'The fountains where the Naiades bedew
 Their shining hair, at length are drained and dried;
 The solid oaks forget their strength, and strew
 Their latest leaf upon the mountains wide;
 The boundless ocean like a drop of dew
 Will be consumed—the stubborn centre must
 Be scattered, like a cloud of summer dust.

XXIV

'And ye with them will perish, one by one;—
 If I must sigh to think that this shall be,
 If I must weep when the surviving Sun
 Shall smile on your decay—oh, ask not me
 To love you till your little race is run;
 I cannot die as ye must—over me
 Your leaves shall glance—the streams in which ye dwell
 Shall be my paths henceforth, and so—farewell!—

XXV

She spoke and wept:—the dark and azure well
 Sparkled beneath the shower of her bright tears,
 And every little circlet where they fell
 Flung to the cavern-roof inconstant spheres
 And intertangled lines of light:—a knell
 Of sobbing voices came upon her ears
 From those departing Forms, o'er the serene
 Of the white streams and of the forest green.

XXVI

All day the wizard lady sate aloof,
 Spelling out scrolls of dread antiquity,
 Under the cavern's fountain-lighted roof;
 Or broidering the pictured poesy
 Of some high tale upon her growing woof,
 Which the sweet splendour of her smiles could dye
 In hues outshining heaven—and ever she
 Added some grace to the wrought poesy.

XXVII

While on her hearth lay blazing many a piece
 Of sandal wood, rare gums, and cinnamon;
 Men scarcely know how beautiful fire is—
 Each flame of it is as a precious stone
 Dissolved in ever-moving light, and this
 Belongs to each and all who gaze upon.
 The Witch beheld it not, for in her hand
 She held a woof that dimmed the burning brand.

XXVIII

This lady never slept, but lay in trance 265
 All night within the fountain—as in sleep.
 Its emerald crags glowed in her beauty's glance;
 Through the green splendour of the water deep
 She saw the constellations reel and dance
 Like fire-flies—and withal did ever keep 270
 The tenour of her contemplations calm,
 With open eyes, closed feet, and folded palm.

XXIX

And when the whirlwinds and the clouds descended
 From the white pinnacles of that cold hill,
 She passed at dewfall to a space extended, 275
 Where in a lawn of flowering asphodel
 Amid a wood of pines and cedars blended,
 There yawned an inextinguishable well
 Of crimson fire—full even to the brim,
 And overflowing all the margin trim. 280

XXX

Within the which she lay when the fierce war
 Of wintry winds shook that innocuous liquor
 In many a mimic moon and bearded star
 O'er woods and lawns;—the serpent heard it flicker
 In sleep, and dreaming still, he crept afar— 285
 And when the windless snow descended thicker
 Than autumn leaves, she watched it as it came
 Melt on the surface of the level flame.

XXXI

She had a boat, which some say Vulcan wrought
 For Venus, as the chariot of her star; 290
 But it was found too feeble to be fraught
 With all the ardours in that sphere which are,
 And so she sold it, and Apollo bought
 And gave it to this daughter: from a car
 Changed to the fairest and the lightest boat 295
 Which ever upon mortal stream did float.

XXXII

And others say, that, when but three hours old,
 The first-born Love out of his cradle leapt,
 And clove dun Chaos with his wings of gold,
 And like a horticultural adept, 300
 Stole a strange seed, and wrapped it up in mould,
 And sowed it in his mother's star, and kept
 Watering it all the summer with sweet dew,
 And with his wings fanning it as it grew.

XXXIII

The plant grew strong and green, the snowy flower
 Fell, and the long and gourd-like fruit began 305
 To turn the light and dew by inward power
 To its own substance; woven tracery ran
 Of light firm texture, ribbed and branching, o'er
 The solid rind, like a leaf's veinèd fan— 310
 Of which Love scooped this boat—and with soft motion
 Piloted it round the circumfluous ocean.

XXXIV

This boat she moored upon her fount, and lit
 A living spirit within all its frame,
 Breathing the soul of swiftness into it. 315
 Couched on the fountain like a panther tame,
 One of the twain at Evan's feet that sit—
 Or as on Vesta's sceptre a swift flame—
 Or on blind Homer's heart a wingèd thought,—
 In joyous expectation lay the boat. 320

XXXV

Then by strange art she kneaded fire and snow
 Together, tempering the repugnant mass
 With liquid love—all things together grow
 Through which the harmony of love can pass;
 And a fair Shape out of her hands did flow— 325
 A living Image, which did far surpass
 In beauty that bright shape of vital stone
 Which drew the heart out of Pygmalion.

XXXVI

A sexless thing it was, and in its growth
 It seemed to have developed no defect 330
 Of either sex, yet all the grace of both,—
 In gentleness and strength its limbs were decked;
 The bosom swelled lightly with its full youth,
 The countenance was such as might select
 Some artist that his skill should never die, 335
 Imaging forth such perfect purity.

XXXVII

From its smooth shoulders hung two rapid wings,
 Fit to have borne it to the seventh sphere,
 Tipped with the speed of liquid lightnings,
 Dyed in the ardours of the atmosphere: 340
 She led her creature to the boiling springs
 Where the light boat was moored, and said: 'Sit here!'
 And pointed to the prow, and took her seat
 Beside the rudder, with opposing feet.

333 swelled lightly *ed. 1824, B.*; lightly swelled *edd. 1839*; swelling lightly with its full growth *transcript.* 339 lightnings *B., edd. 1839*; lightning *ed. 1824, transcript.*

XXXVIII

And down the streams which clove those mountains vast, 345
 Around their inland islets, and amid
 The panther-peopled forests, whose shade cast
 Darkness and odours, and a pleasure hid
 In melancholy gloom, the pinnacle passed;
 By many a star-surrounded pyramid 350
 Of icy crag cleaving the purple sky,
 And caverns yawning round unfathomably.

XXXIX

The silver noon into that winding dell,
 With slanted gleam athwart the forest tops,
 Tempered like golden evening, feebly fell; 355
 A green and glowing light, like that which drops
 From folded lilies in which glow-worms dwell,
 When Earth over her face Night's mantle wraps;
 Between the severed mountains lay on high,
 Over the stream, a narrow rift of sky. 360

XL

And ever as she went, the Image lay
 With folded wings and unawakened eyes;
 And o'er its gentle countenance did play
 The busy dreams, as thick as summer flies,
 Chasing the rapid smiles that would not stay, 365
 And drinking the warm tears, and the sweet sighs
 Inhaling, which, with busy murmur vain,
 They had aroused from that full heart and brain.

XLI

And ever down the prone vale, like a cloud
 Upon a stream of wind, the pinnacle went: 370
 Now lingering on the pools, in which abode
 The calm and darkness of the deep content
 In which they paused; now o'er the shallow road
 Of white and dancing waters, all besprent
 With sand and polished pebbles:—mortal boat 375
 In such a shallow rapid could not float.

XLII

And down the earthquaking cataracts which shiver
 Their snow-like waters into golden air,
 Or under chasms unfathomable ever
 Sepulchre them, till in their rage they tear 380
 A subterranean portal for the river,
 It fled—the circling sunbows did upbear
 Its fall down the hoar precipice of spray,
 Lighting it far upon its lampless way.

XLIII

And when the wizard lady would ascend 385
 The labyrinths of some many-winding vale,
 Which to the inmost mountain upward tend—
 She called 'Hermaphroditus!'—and the pale
 And heavy hue which slumber could extend
 Over its lips and eyes, as on the gale 390
 A rapid shadow from a slope of grass,
 Into the darkness of the stream did pass.

XLIV

And it unfurled its heaven-coloured pinions,
 With stars of fire spotting the stream below;
 And from above into the Sun's dominions 395
 Flinging a glory, like the golden glow
 In which Spring clothes her emerald-wingèd minions,
 All interwoven with fine feathery snow
 And moonlight splendour of intensest rime,
 With which frost paints the pines in winter time. 400

XLV

And then it winnowed the Elysian air
 Which ever hung about that lady bright,
 With its aethereal vans—and speeding there,
 Like a star up the torrent of the night,
 Or a swift eagle in the morning glare 405
 Breasting the whirlwind with impetuous flight,
 The pinnacle, oared by those enchanted wings,
 Clove the fierce streams towards their upper springs.

XLVI

The water flashed, like sunlight by the prow
 Of a noon-wandering meteor flung to Heaven; 410
 The still air seemed as if its waves did flow
 In tempest down the mountains; loosely driven
 The lady's radiant hair streamed to and fro:
 Beneath, the billows having vainly striven
 Indignant and impetuous, roared to feel 415
 The swift and steady motion of the keel.

XLVII

Or, when the weary moon was in the wane,
 Or in the noon of interlunar night,
 The lady-witch in visions could not chain
 Her spirit; but sailed forth under the light 420
 Of shooting stars, and bade extend amain
 Its storm-outspeeding wings, the Hermaphrodite;
 She to the Austral waters took her way,
 Beyond the fabulous Thamondocana,—

XLVIII

Where, like a meadow which no scythe has shaven, 425
 Which rain could never bend, or whirl-blast shake,
 With the Antarctic constellations paven,
 Canopus and his crew, lay the Austral lake—
 There she would build herself a windless haven
 Out of the clouds whose moving turrets make 430
 The bastions of the storm, when through the sky
 The spirits of the tempest thundered by:

XLIX

A haven beneath whose translucent floor
 The tremulous stars sparkled unfathomably,
 And around which the solid vapours hoar, 435
 Based on the level waters, to the sky
 Lifted their dreadful crags, and like a shore
 Of wintry mountains, inaccessibly
 Hemmed in with rifts and precipices gray,
 And hanging crags, many a cove and bay. 440

L

And whilst the outer lake beneath the lash
 Of the wind's scourge, foamed like a wounded thing,
 And the incessant hail with stony clash
 Ploughed up the waters, and the flagging wing
 Of the roused cormorant in the lightning flash 445
 Looked like the wreck of some wind-wandering
 Fragment of inky thunder-smoke—this haven
 Was as a gem to copy Heaven engraven,—

LI

On which that lady played her many pranks,
 Circling the image of a shooting star, 450
 Even as a tiger on Hydaspes' banks
 Outspeeds the antelopes which speediest are,
 In her light boat; and many quips and cranks
 She played upon the water, till the car
 Of the late moon, like a sick matron wan, 455
 To journey from the misty east began.

LII

And then she called out of the hollow turrets
 Of those high clouds, white, golden and vermilion,
 The armies of her ministering spirits—
 In mighty legions, million after million, 460
 They came, each troop emblazoning its merits
 On meteor flags; and many a proud pavilion
 Of the intertexture of the atmosphere
 They pitched upon the plain of the calm mere.

LIII

They framed the imperial tent of their great Queen 465
 Of woven exhalations, underlaid
 With lambent lightning-fire, as may be seen
 A dome of thin and open ivory inlaid
 With crimson silk—cressets from the serene
 Hung there, and on the water for her tread 470
 A tapestry of fleece-like mist was strewn,
 Dyed in the beams of the ascending moon.

LIV

And on a throne o'erlaid with starlight, caught
 Upon those wandering isles of æry dew,
 Which highest shoals of mountain shipwreck not, 475
 She sate, and heard all that had happened new
 Between the earth and moon, since they had brought
 The last intelligence—and now she grew
 Pale as that moon, lost in the watery night—
 And now she wept, and now she laughed outright. 480

LV

These were tame pleasures; she would often climb
 The steepest ladder of the crudded rack
 Up to some beaked cape of cloud sublime,
 And like Arion on the dolphin's back
 Ride singing through the shoreless air;—oft-time 485
 Following the serpent lightning's winding track,
 She ran upon the platforms of the wind,
 And laughed to hear the fire-balls roar behind.

LVI

And sometimes to those streams of upper air
 Which whirl the earth in its diurnal round, 490
 She would ascend, and win the spirits there
 To let her join their chorus. Mortals found
 That on those days the sky was calm and fair,
 And mystic snatches of harmonious sound
 Wandered upon the earth where'er she passed, 495
 And happy thoughts of hope, too sweet to last.

LVII

But her choice sport was, in the hours of sleep,
 To glide adown old Nilus, where he threads
 Egypt and Aethiopia, from the steep
 Of utmost Axumè, until he spreads, 500
 Like a calm flock of silver-fleeced sheep,
 His waters on the plain: and crested heads
 Of cities and proud temples gleam amid,
 And many a vapour-belted pyramid.

LVIII

By Moeris and the Mareotid lakes, 505
 Strewn with faint blooms like bridal chamber floors,
 Where naked boys bridling tame water-snakes,
 Or charioteering ghastly alligators,
 Had left on the sweet waters mighty wakes
 Of those huge forms—within the brazen doors 510
 Of the great Labyrinth slept both boy and beast,
 Tired with the pomp of their Osirian feast.

LIX

And where within the surface of the river
 The shadows of the massy temples lie,
 And never are erased—but tremble ever 515
 Like things which every cloud can doom to die,
 Through lotus-paven canals, and wheresoever
 The works of man pierced that serenest sky
 With tombs, and towers, and fanes, 'twas her delight
 To wander in the shadow of the night. 520

LX

With motion like the spirit of that wind
 Whose soft step deepens slumber, her light feet
 Passed through the peopled haunts of humankind,
 Scattering sweet visions from her presence sweet,
 Through fane, and palace-court, and labyrinth mined 525
 With many a dark and subterranean street
 Under the Nile, through chambers high and deep
 She passed, observing mortals in their sleep.

LXI

A pleasure sweet doubtless it was to see
 Mortals subdued in all the shapes of sleep. 530
 Here lay two sister twins in infancy;
 There, a lone youth who in his dreams did weep;
 Within, two lovers linkèd innocently
 In their loose locks which over both did creep
 Like ivy from one stem;—and there lay calm 535
 Old age with snow-bright hair and folded palm.

LXII

But other troubled forms of sleep she saw,
 Not to be mirrored in a holy song—
 Distortions foul of supernatural awe,
 And pale imaginings of visioned wrong; 540
 And all the code of Custom's lawless law
 Written upon the brows of old and young:
 'This,' said the wizard maiden, 'is the strife
 Which stirs the liquid surface of man's life.'

LXIII

And little did the sight disturb her soul.—
 We, the weak mariners of that wide lake 545
 Where'er its shores extend or billows roll,
 Our course unpiloted and starless make
 O'er its wild surface to an unknown goal:—
 But she in the calm depths her way could take, 550
 Where in bright bowers immortal forms abide
 Beneath the weltering of the restless tide.

LXIV

And she saw princes couched under the glow
 Of sunlike gems; and round each temple-court
 In dormitories ranged, row after row, 555
 She saw the priests asleep—all of one sort—
 For all were educated to be so.—
 The peasants in their huts, and in the port
 The sailors she saw cradled on the waves,
 And the dead lulled within their dreamless graves. 560

LXV

And all the forms in which those spirits lay
 Were to her sight like the diaphanous
 Veils, in which those sweet ladies oft array
 Their delicate limbs, who would conceal from us
 Only their scorn of all concealment: they 565
 Move in the light of their own beauty thus.
 But these and all now lay with sleep upon them,
 And little thought a Witch was looking on them.

LXVI

She, all those human figures breathing there,
 Beheld as living spirits—to her eyes 570
 The naked beauty of the soul lay bare,
 And often through a rude and worn disguise
 She saw the inner form most bright and fair—
 And then she had a charm of strange device,
 Which, murmured on mute lips with tender tone, 575
 Could make that spirit mingle with her own.

LXVII

Alas! Aurora, what wouldst thou have given
 For such a charm when Tithon became gray?
 Or how much, Venus, of thy silver heaven
 Wouldst thou have yielded, ere Proserpina 580
 Had half (oh! why not all?) the debt forgiven
 Which dear Adonis had been doomed to pay,
 To any witch who would have taught you it?
 The Heliad doth not know its value yet.

LXVIII

'Tis said in after times her spirit free 585
 Knew what love was, and felt itself alone—
 But holy Dian could not chaster be
 Before she stooped to kiss Endymion,
 Than now this lady—like a sexless bee
 Tasting all blossoms, and confined to none, 590
 Among those mortal forms, the wizard-maiden
 Passed with an eye serene and heart unladen.

LXIX

To those she saw most beautiful, she gave
 Strange panacea in a crystal bowl:—
 They drank in their deep sleep of that sweet wave, 595
 And lived thenceforward as if some control,
 Mightier than life, were in them; and the grave
 Of such, when death oppressed the weary soul,
 Was as a green and overarching bower
 Lit by the gems of many a starry flower. 600

LXX

For on the night when they were buried, she
 Restored the embalmers' ruining, and shook
 The light out of the funeral lamps, to be
 A mimic day within that deathly nook;
 And she unwound the woven imagery 605
 Of second childhood's swaddling bands, and took
 The coffin, its last cradle, from its niche,
 And threw it with contempt into a ditch.

LXXI

And there the body lay, age after age,
 Mute, breathing, beating, warm, and undecaying, 610
 Like one asleep in a green hermitage,
 With gentle smiles about its eyelids playing,
 And living in its dreams beyond the rage
 Of death or life; while they were still arraying
 In liveries ever new, the rapid, blind 615
 And fleeting generations of mankind.

LXXII

And she would write strange dreams upon the brain
 Of those who were less beautiful, and make
 All harsh and crooked purposes more vain
 Than in the desert is the serpent's wake 620
 Which the sand covers—all his evil gain
 The miser in such dreams would rise and shake
 Into a beggar's lap;—the lying scribe
 Would his own lies betray without a bribe.

596 thenceforward *B.*; thence forth *ed.* 1824; henceforward *transcript.*
B.; Was a *ed.* 1824. 601 night when *transcript*; night that *ed.* 1824, *B.*
transcript, B.; sleep *ed.* 1824.

599 Was as a
 612 smiles

LXXIII

The priests would write an explanation full,
 Translating hieroglyphics into Greek, 625
 How the God Apis really was a bull,
 And nothing more; and bid the herald stick
 The same against the temple doors, and pull
 The old cant down; they licensed all to speak 630
 Whate'er they thought of hawks, and cats, and geese,
 By pastoral letters to each diocese.

LXXIV

The king would dress an ape up in his crown
 And robes, and seat him on his glorious seat,
 And on the right hand of the sunlike throne 635
 Would place a gaudy mock-bird to repeat
 The chatterings of the monkey.—Every one
 Of the prone courtiers crawled to kiss the feet
 Of their great Emperor, when the morning came,
 And kissed—alas, how many kiss the same! 640

LXXV

The soldiers dreamed that they were blacksmiths, and
 Walked out of quarters in somnambulism;
 Round the red anvils you might see them stand
 Like Cyclopes in Vulcan's sooty abysm,
 Beating their swords to ploughshares;—in a band 645
 The gaolers sent those of the liberal schism
 Free through the streets of Memphis, much, I wis,
 To the annoyance of king Amasis.

LXXVI

And timid lovers who had been so coy,
 They hardly knew whether they loved or not, 650
 Would rise out of their rest, and take sweet joy,
 To the fulfilment of their inmost thought;
 And when next day the maiden and the boy
 Met one another, both, like sinners caught,
 Blushed at the thing which each believed was done 655
 Only in fancy—till the tenth moon shone;

LXXVII

And then the Witch would let them take no ill:
 Of many thousand schemes which lovers find,
 The Witch found one,—and so they took their fill
 Of happiness in marriage warm and kind. 660
 Friends who, by practice of some envious skill,
 Were torn apart—a wide wound, mind from mind!—
 She did unite again with visions clear
 Of deep affection and of truth sincere.

LXXVIII

These were the pranks she played among the cities 665
 Of mortal men, and what she did to Sprites
 And Gods, entangling them in her sweet ditties
 To do her will, and show their subtle sleights,
 I will declare another time; for it is
 A tale more fit for the weird winter nights 670
 Than for these garish summer days, when we
 Scarcely believe much more than we can see.

NOTE ON THE WITCH OF ATLAS, BY MRS. SHELLEY

WE spent the summer of 1820 at the Baths of San Giuliano, four miles from Pisa. These baths were of great use to Shelley in soothing his nervous irritability. We made several excursions in the neighbourhood. The country around is fertile, and diversified and rendered picturesque by ranges of near hills and more distant mountains. The peasantry are a handsome intelligent race; and there was a gladsome sunny heaven spread over us, that rendered home and every scene we visited cheerful and bright. During some of the hottest days of August, Shelley made a solitary journey on foot to the summit of Monte San Pellegrino—a mountain of some height, on the top of which there is a chapel, the object, during certain days of the year, of many pilgrimages. The excursion delighted him while it lasted; though he exerted himself too much, and the effect was considerable lassitude and weakness on his return. During the expedition he conceived the idea, and wrote, in the three days immediately succeeding to his return, the *Witch of Atlas*. This poem is peculiarly characteristic of his tastes—wildly fanciful, full of brilliant imagery, and discarding human interest and passion, to revel in the fantastic ideas that his imagination suggested.

The surpassing excellence of *The Cenci* had made me greatly desire that Shelley should increase his popularity by adopting subjects that would more suit the popular taste than a poem conceived in the abstract and dreamy spirit of the *Witch of Atlas*. It was not only that I wished him to acquire popularity as redounding to his fame; but I believed that he would obtain a greater mastery over his own powers, and greater happiness in his mind, if public applause crowned his endeavours. The few stanzas that precede the poem were addressed to me on my representing these ideas to him. Even now I believe that I was in the right. Shelley did not expect sympathy and approbation from the public; but the want of it took away a portion of the ardour that ought to have sustained him while writing. He was thrown on his own resources, and on the inspiration of his own soul; and wrote because his mind overflowed, without the hope of being appreciated. I had not the most distant wish that he should truckle in opinion, or submit his lofty aspirations for the human race to the low ambition and pride of the many; but I felt sure that, if his poems were more addressed to the common feelings of men, his proper rank among the writers of the day would be acknowledged, and that popularity as a poet would enable his countrymen to do justice to his character and virtues, which in those days it was the mode to attack with the most flagitious calumnies and insulting abuse. That he felt these things deeply cannot be doubted, though he armed himself with the consciousness of acting from a lofty and heroic sense of right. The truth burst from his

heart sometimes in solitude, and he would write a few unfinished verses that showed that he felt the sting; among such I find the following:—

‘Alas! this is not what I thought Life was.

I knew that there were crimes and evil men,
Misery and hate; nor did I hope to pass

Untouched by suffering through the rugged glen.

In mine own heart I saw as in a glass

The hearts of others. . . And, when

I went among my kind, with triple brass

Of calm endurance my weak breast I armed,

To bear scorn, fear, and hate—a woful mass!’

I believed that all this morbid feeling would vanish if the chord of sympathy between him and his countrymen were touched. But my persuasions were vain, the mind could not be bent from its natural inclination. Shelley shrunk instinctively from portraying human passion, with its mixture of good and evil, of disappointment and disquiet. Such opened again the wounds of his own heart; and he loved to shelter himself rather in the airiest flights of fancy, forgetting love and hate, and regret and lost hope, in such imaginations as borrowed their hues from sunrise or sunset, from the yellow moonshine or paly twilight, from the aspect of the far ocean or the shadows of the woods,—which celebrated the singing of the winds among the pines, the flow of a murmuring stream, and the thousand harmonious sounds which Nature creates in her solitudes. These are the materials which form the *Witch of Atlas*: it is a brilliant congregation of ideas such as his senses gathered, and his fancy coloured, during his rambles in the sunny land he so much loved.

OEDIPUS TYRANNUS

OR

SWELLFOOT THE TYRANT

A TRAGEDY IN TWO ACTS

TRANSLATED FROM THE ORIGINAL DORIC

‘Choose Reform or Civil War,
When through thy streets, instead of hare with dogs,
A CONSORT-QUEEN shall hunt a KING with hogs,
Riding on the IONIAN MINOTAUR.’

[Begun at the Baths of San Giuliano, near Pisa, August 24, 1819; published anonymously by J. Johnston, Cheapside (imprint C. F. Seyfang), 1820. On a threat of prosecution the publisher surrendered the whole impression, seven copies—the total number sold—excepted. *Oedipus* does not appear in the first edition of the *Poetical Works*, 1839, but it was included by Mrs. Shelley in the second edition of that year. Our text is that of the *editio princeps*, 1820, save in three places, where the reading of ed. 1820 will be found at the foot of the page.]

ADVERTISEMENT

THIS Tragedy is one of a triad, or system of three Plays (an arrangement according to which the Greeks were accustomed to connect their dramatic

representations), elucidating the wonderful and appalling fortunes of the SWELLFOOT dynasty. It was evidently written by some *learned Theban*, and, from its characteristic dulness, apparently before the duties on the importation of *Attic salt* had been repealed by the Boeotarchs. The tenderness with which he treats the PIGS proves him to have been a *sus Boeotiae*; possibly *Epicuri de grege porcus*; for, as the poet observes,

‘A fellow feeling makes us wondrous kind.’

No liberty has been taken with the translation of this remarkable piece of antiquity, except the suppressing a seditious and blasphemous Chorus of the Pigs and Bulls at the last Act. The word *Hoydipouse* (or more properly *Oedipus*) has been rendered literally SWELLFOOT, without its having been conceived necessary to determine whether a swelling of the hind or the fore feet of the Swinish Monarch is particularly indicated.

Should the remaining portions of this Tragedy be found, entitled, *Swellfoot in Angaria*, and *Charité*, the Translator might be tempted to give them to the reading Public.

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

TYRANT SWELLFOOT, <i>King of Thebes.</i>	<i>The</i> GADFLY.
IONA TAURINA, <i>his Queen.</i>	<i>The</i> LEECH.
MAMMON, <i>Arch-Priest of Famine.</i>	<i>The</i> RAT.
PURGANAX	MOSES, <i>the Sow-gelder.</i>
DAKRY	SOLOMON, <i>the Porkman.</i>
LAOCTONOS	ZEPHANIAH, <i>Pig-butcher.</i>

The MINOTAUR.

CHORUS *of the Swinish Multitude.*

GUARDS, ATTENDANTS, PRIESTS, *etc., etc.*

SCENE.—THEBES

ACT I

SCENE I.—*A magnificent Temple, built of thigh-bones and death's-heads, and tiled with scalps. Over the Altar the statue of Famine, veiled; a number of Boars, Sows, and Sucking-Pigs, crowned with thistle, shamrock, and oak, sitting on the steps, and clinging round the Altar of the Temple.*

Enter SWELLFOOT, *in his Royal robes, without perceiving the PIGS.*

Swellfoot. Thou supreme Goddess! by whose power divine
These graceful limbs are clothed in proud array

[He contemplates himself with satisfaction.

Of gold and purple, and this kingly paunch
Swells like a sail before a favouring breeze,
And these most sacred nether promontories
Lie satisfied with layers of fat; and these
Boeotian cheeks, like Egypt's pyramid,
(Nor with less toil were their foundations laid)[†],
Sustain the cone of my untroubled brain,

5

[†] See Universal History for an account of the number of people who died, and the immense consumption of garlic by the wretched Egyptians, who made a sepulchre for the name as well as the bodies of their tyrants.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

That point, the emblem of a pointless nothing! 10
 Thou to whom Kings and laurelled Emperors,
 Radical-butchers, Paper-money-millers,
 Bishops and Deacons, and the entire army
 Of those fat martyrs to the persecution
 Of stifling turtle-soup, and brandy-devils, 15
 Offer their secret vows! Thou plenteous Ceres
 Of their Eleusis, hail!

The Swine. Eigh! eigh! eigh! eigh!

Swellfoot. Ha! what are ye,
 Who, crowned with leaves devoted to the Furies,
 Cling round this sacred shrine?

Swine. Aigh! aigh! aigh!

Swellfoot. What! ye that are 20
 The very beasts that, offered at her altar
 With blood and groans, salt-cake, and fat, and inwards,
 Ever propitiate her reluctant will
 When taxes are withheld?

Swine. Ugh! ugh! ugh!

Swellfoot. What! ye who grub
 With filthy snouts my red potatoes up
 In Allan's rushy bog? Who eat the oats 25
 Up, from my cavalry in the Hebrides?
 Who swill the hog-wash soup my cooks digest
 From bones, and rags, and scraps of shoe-leather,
 Which should be given to cleaner Pigs than you?

The Swine.—Semichorus I.

The same, alas! the same; 30
 Though only now the name
 Of Pig remains to me.

Semichorus II.

If 'twere your kingly will
 Us wretched Swine to kill,
 What should we yield to thee? 35

Swellfoot. Why, skin and bones, and some few hairs for mortar.

Chorus of Swine.

I have heard your Laureate sing,
 That pity was a royal thing;
 Under your mighty ancestors, we Pigs
 Were bless'd as nightingales on myrtle sprigs, 40
 Or grasshoppers that live on noonday dew,
 And sung, old annals tell, as sweetly too;
 But now our sties are fallen in, we catch
 The murrain and the mange, the scab and itch;
 Sometimes your royal dogs tear down our thatch, 45
 And then we seek the shelter of a ditch;
 Hog-wash or grains, or ruta-baga, none
 Has yet been ours since your reign begun.

First Sow.

My Pigs, 'tis in vain to tug.

Second Sow.

I could almost eat my litter.

50

First Pig.

I suck, but no milk will come from the dug.

Second Pig.

Our skin and our bones would be bitter.

The Boars.

We fight for this rag of greasy rug,
Though a trough of wash would be fitter.

Semichorus.

Happier Swine were they than we,
Drowned in the Gadarean sea—

55

I wish that pity would drive out the devils,
Which in your royal bosom hold their revels,
And sink us in the waves of thy compassion!
Alas! the Pigs are an unhappy nation!

60

Now if your Majesty would have our bristles
To bind your mortar with, or fill our colons
With rich blood, or make brawn out of our gristles,

In policy—ask else your royal Solons—
You ought to give us hog-wash and clean straw,
And sties well thatched; besides it is the law!

65

Swellfoot. This is sedition, and rank blasphemy!
Ho! there, my guards!

Enter a GUARD.

Guard. Your sacred Majesty.

Swellfoot. Call in the Jews, Solomon the court porkman,
Moses the sow-gelder, and Zephaniah
The hog-butcher.

70

Guard. They are in waiting, Sire.

Enter SOLOMON, MOSES, and ZEPHANIAH.

Swellfoot. Out with your knife, old Moses, and spay those Sows

[*The PIGS run about in consternation.*

That load the earth with Pigs; cut close and deep.

Moral restraint I see has no effect,

Nor prostitution, nor our own example,

75

Starvation, typhus-fever, war, nor prison—

This was the art which the arch-priest of Famine

Hinted at in his charge to the Theban clergy—

Cut close and deep, good Moses.

Moses.

Let your Majesty

Keep the Boars quiet, else——

Swellfoot. Zephaniah, cut
That fat Hog's throat, the brute seems overfed;
Seditious hunks! to whine for want of grains. 80

Zephaniah. Your sacred Majesty, he has the dropsy;—
We shall find pints of hydatids in 's liver,
He has not half an inch of wholesome fat
Upon his carious ribs—— 85

Swellfoot. 'Tis all the same,
He'll serve instead of riot money, when
Our murmuring troops bivouac in Thebes' streets;
And January winds, after a day
Of butchering, will make them relish carrion. 90
Now, Solomon, I'll sell you in a lump
The whole kit of them.

Solomon. Why, your Majesty,
I could not give——

Swellfoot. Kill them out of the way,
That shall be price enough, and let me hear
Their everlasting grunts and whines no more! 95

[*Exeunt, driving in the SWINE.*]

Enter MAMMON, the Arch-Priest; and PURGANAX, Chief of the Council of Wizards.

Purganax. The future looks as black as death, a cloud,
Dark as the frown of Hell, hangs over it—
The troops grow mutinous—the revenue fails—
There's something rotten in us—for the level
Of the State slopes, its very bases topple, 100
The boldest turn their backs upon themselves!

Mammon. Why what's the matter, my dear fellow, now?
Do the troops mutiny?—decimate some regiments;
Does money fail?—come to my mint—coin paper,
Till gold be at a discount, and ashamed 105
To show his bilious face, go purge himself,
In emulation of her vestal whiteness.

Purganax. Oh, would that this were all! The oracle!!

Mammon. Why it was I who spoke that oracle,
And whether I was dead drunk or inspired, 110
I cannot well remember; nor, in truth,
The oracle itself!

Purganax. The words went thus:—
'Boeotia, choose reform or civil war!
When through the streets, instead of hare with dogs,
A Consort Queen shall hunt a King with Hogs, 115
Riding on the Ionian Minotaur.'

Mammon. Now if the oracle had ne'er foretold
This sad alternative, it must arrive,
Or not, and so it must now that it has;
And whether I was urged by grace divine 120

114 the ed. 1820; thy *cj. Forman*; cf. *Motto below Title*, and *II. i. 153-6.*

Or Lesbian liquor to declare these words,
Which must, as all words must, be false or true,
It matters not: for the same Power made all,
Oracle, wine, and me and you—or none—
'Tis the same thing. If you knew as much
Of oracles as I do——

125

Purganax. You arch-priests
Believe in nothing; if you were to dream
Of a particular number in the Lottery,
You would not buy the ticket?

Mammon. Yet our tickets
Are seldom blanks. But what steps have you taken?
For prophecies, when once they get abroad,
Like liars who tell the truth to serve their ends,
Or hypocrites who, from assuming virtue,
Do the same actions that the virtuous do,
Contrive their own fulfilment. This Iona——
Well—you know what the chaste Pasiphae did,
Wife to that most religious King of Crete,
And still how popular the tale is here;
And these dull Swine of Thebes boast their descent
From the free Minotaur. You know they still
Call themselves Bulls, though thus degenerate,
And everything relating to a Bull
Is popular and respectable in Thebes.
Their arms are seven Bulls in a field gules;
They think their strength consists in eating beef,—
Now there were danger in the precedent
If Queen Iona——

130

135

140

145

Purganax. I have taken good care
That shall not be. I struck the crust o' the earth
With this enchanted rod, and Hell lay bare!
And from a cavern full of ugly shapes
I chose a LEECH, a GADFLY, and a RAT.
The Gadfly was the same which Juno sent
To agitate Io¹, and which Ezekiel² mentions
That the Lord whistled for out of the mountains
Of utmost Aethiopia, to torment
Mesopotamian Babylon. The beast
Has a loud trumpet like the scarabee,
His crookèd tail is barbed with many stings,
Each able to make a thousand wounds, and each
Immedicable; from his convex eyes
He sees fair things in many hideous shapes,
And trumpets all his falsehood to the world.

150

155

160

129 ticket? *ed. 1820*; ticket! *ed. 1839.* 135 their own *Mrs. Shelley, later edd.*; their *edd. 1820 and 1839.*

¹ The *Prometheus Bound* of Aeschylus.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

² And the Lord whistled for the gadfly out of Aethiopia, and for the bee of Egypt, etc.—EZEKIEL.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

Like other beetles he is fed on dung—
 He has eleven feet with which he crawls,
 Trailing a blistering slime, and this foul beast 165
 Has tracked Iona from the Theban limits,
 From isle to isle, from city unto city,
 Urging her flight from the far Chersonese
 To fabulous Solyma, and the Aetnean Isle,
 Ortygia, Melite, and Calypso's Rock, 170
 And the swart tribes of Garamant and Fez,
 Aeolia and Elysium, and thy shores,
 Parthenope, which now, alas! are free!
 And through the fortunate Saturnian land,
 Into the darkness of the West.

Mammon. But if 175
 This Gadfly should drive Iona hither?

Purganax. Gods! what an *if*! but there is my gray RAT:
 So thin with want, he can crawl in and out
 Of any narrow chink and filthy hole,
 And he shall creep into her dressing-room, 180
 And——

Mammon. My dear friend, where are your wits? as if
 She does not always toast a piece of cheese
 And bait the trap? and rats, when lean enough
 To crawl through *such* chinks——

Purganax. But my LEECH—a leech 185
 Fit to suck blood, with lubricous round rings,
 Capaciously expatiative, which make
 His little body like a red balloon,
 As full of blood as that of hydrogen,
 Sucked from men's hearts; insatiably he sucks
 And clings and pulls—a horse-leech, whose deep maw 190
 The plethoric King Swellfoot could not fill,
 And who, till full, will cling for ever.

Mammon. This
 For Queen Iona would suffice, and less;
 But 'tis the Swinish multitude I fear,
 And in that fear I have——

Purganax. Done what?

Mammon. Disinherited 195
 My eldest son Chrysaor, because he
 Attended public meetings, and would always
 Stand prating there of commerce, public faith,
 Economy, and unadulterate coin,
 And other topics, ultra-radical; 200
 And have entailed my estate, called the Fool's Paradise,
 And funds in fairy-money, bonds, and bills,
 Upon my accomplished daughter Banknotina,
 And married her to the gallows¹.

¹ 'If one should marry a gallows, and beget young gibbets, I never saw one so prone.'
 CYMBELINE.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

Purganax. A good match!

Mammon. A high connexion, Purganax. The bridegroom
Is of a very ancient family,
Of Hounslow Heath, Tyburn, and the New Drop,
And has great influence in both Houses;—oh!
He makes the fondest husband; nay, *too* fond,—
New-married people should not kiss in public;
But the poor souls love one another so!
And then my little grandchildren, the gibbets,
Promising children as you ever saw,—
The young playing at hanging, the elder learning
How to hold radicals. They are well taught too,
For every gibbet says its catechism
And reads a select chapter in the Bible
Before it goes to play.

205

210

215

[*A most tremendous humming is heard.*

Purganax. Ha! what do I hear?

Enter the GADFLY.

Mammon. Your Gadfly, as it seems, is tired of gadding.

Gadfly.

Hum! hum! hum!
From the lakes of the Alps, and the cold gray scalps
Of the mountains, I come!

220

Hum! hum! hum!
From Morocco and Fez, and the high palaces
Of golden Byzantium;

225

From the temples divine of old Palestine,
From Athens and Rome,
With a ha! and a hum!
I come! I come!

All inn-doors and windows
Were open to me:
I saw all that sin does,
Which lamps hardly see

230

That burn in the night by the curtained bed,—
The impudent lamps! for they blushed not red,
Dinging and singing,

235

From slumber I rung her,
Loud as the clank of an ironmonger;
Hum! hum! hum!

Far, far, far!
With the trump of my lips, and the sting at my hips,
I drove her—afar!

240

Far, far, far!
From city to city, abandoned of pity,
A ship without needle or star;—

245

Homeless she passed, like a cloud on the blast,
 Seeking peace, finding war ;—
 She is here in her car,
 From afar, and afar ;—
 Hum! hum!

250

I have stung her and wrung her,
 The venom is working ;—
 And if you had hung her
 With canting and quirking,
 She could not be deader than she will be soon ;—
 I have driven her close to you, under the moon,
 Night and day, hum! hum! ha!
 I have hummed her and drummed her
 From place to place, till at last I have dumbd her,
 Hum! hum! hum!

255

260

Enter the LEECH and the RAT.

Leech.

I will suck
 Blood or muck!
 The disease of the state is a plethory,
 Who so fit to reduce it as I?

Rat.

I'll slily seize and
 Let blood from her weasand,—
 Creeping through crevice, and chink, and cranny,
 With my snaky tail, and my sides so scranny.

265

Purganax.

Aroint ye! thou unprofitable worm! *[To the LEECH.*
 And thou, dull beetle, get thee back to hell! *270*

[To the GADFLY.

To sting the ghosts of Babylonian kings,
 And the ox-headed Io——

Swine (within).

Ugh, ugh, ugh!
 Hail! Iona the divine,
 We will be no longer Swine,
 But Bulls with horns and dewlaps.

Rat.

For,

275

You know, my lord, the Minotaur——

Purganax (fiercely).

Be silent! get to hell! or I will call
 The cat out of the kitchen. Well, Lord Mammon,
 This is a pretty business. *[Exit the RAT.*

260 Edd. 1820, 1839 have no stage direction after this line.

Mammon.

I will go

And spell some scheme to make it ugly then.—

[*Exit.*

Enter SWELLFOOT.

Swellfoot. She is returned! Taurina is in Thebes, 281
When Swellfoot wishes that she were in hell!
Oh, Hymen, clothed in yellow jealousy,
And waving o'er the couch of wedded kings
The torch of Discord with its fiery hair; 285
This is thy work, thou patron saint of queens!
Swellfoot is wived! though parted by the sea,
The very name of wife had conjugal rights;
Her cursèd image ate, drank, slept with me,
And in the arms of Adiposa oft 290
Her memory has received a husband's——
[*A loud tumult, and cries of 'Iona for ever!—No Swellfoot!'*
Hark!

How the Swine cry Iona Taurina;
I suffer the real presence; Purganax,
Off with her head!

Purganax. But I must first impanel
A jury of the Pigs.

Swellfoot. Pack them then. 295

Purganax. Or fattening some few in two separate sties,
And giving them clean straw, tying some bits
Of ribbon round their legs—giving their Sows
Some tawdry lace, and bits of lustre glass,
And their young Boars white and red rags, and tails 300
Of cows, and jay feathers, and sticking cauliflowers
Between the ears of the old ones; and when
They are persuaded, that by the inherent virtue
Of these things, they are all imperial Pigs,
Good Lord! they'd rip each other's bellies up, 305
Not to say, help us in destroying her.

Swellfoot. This plan might be tried too;—where's General
Laoctonos?

Enter LAOCTONOS and DAKRY.

It is my royal pleasure
That you, Lord General, bring the head and body,
If separate it would please me better, hither 310
Of Queen Iona.

Laoctonos. That pleasure I well knew,
And made a charge with those battalions bold,
Called, from their dress and grin, the royal apes,
Upon the Swine, who in a hollow square
Enclosed her, and received the first attack 315
Like so many rhinoceroses, and then
Retreating in good order, with bare tusks
And wrinkled snouts presented to the foe,

Bore her in triumph to the public sty.

What is still worse, some Sows upon the ground

320

Have given the ape-guards apples, nuts, and gin,

And they all whisk their tails aloft, and cry,

'Long live Iona! down with Swellfoot!'

Purganax.

Hark!

The Swine (without). Long live Iona! down with Swellfoot!

Dakry.

I

Went to the garret of the swineherd's tower,

325

Which overlooks the sty, and made a long

Harangue (all words) to the assembled Swine,

Of delicacy, mercy, judgement, law,

Morals, and precedents, and purity,

Adultery, destitution, and divorce,

330

Piety, faith, and state necessity,

And how I loved the Queen!—and then I wept

With the pathos of my own eloquence,

And every tear turned to a mill-stone, which

Brained many a gaping Pig, and there was made

335

A slough of blood and brains upon the place,

Greased with the pounded bacon; round and round

The mill-stones rolled, ploughing the pavement up,

And hurling Sucking-Pigs into the air,

With dust and stones.—

Enter MAMMON.

Mammon.

I wonder that gray wizards

340

Like you should be so beardless in their schemes;

It had been but a point of policy

To keep Iona and the Swine apart.

Divide and rule! but ye have made a junction

Between two parties who will govern you

345

But for my art.—Behold this BAG! it is

The poison BAG of that Green Spider huge,

On which our spies skulked in ovation through

The streets of Thebes, when they were paved with dead:

A bane so much the deadlier fills it now

350

As calumny is worse than death,—for here

The Gadfly's venom, fifty times distilled,

Is mingled with the vomit of the Leech,

In due proportion, and black ratsbane, which

That very Rat, who, like the Pontic tyrant,

355

Nurtures himself on poison, dare not touch;—

All is sealed up with the broad seal of Fraud,

Who is the Devil's Lord High Chancellor,

And over it the Primate of all Hell

Murmured this pious baptism:—'Be thou called

360

The GREEN BAG; and this power and grace be thine:

That thy contents, on whomsoever poured,

Turn innocence to guilt, and gentlest looks

To savage, foul, and fierce deformity.
 Let all baptized by thy infernal dew 365
 Be called adulterer, drunkard, liar, wretch!
 No name left out which orthodoxy loves,
 Court Journal or legitimate Review!—
 Be they called tyrant, beast, fool, glutton, lover
 Of other wives and husbands than their own— 370
 The heaviest sin on this side of the Alps!
 Wither they to a ghastly caricature
 Of what was human!—let not man or beast
 Behold their face with unaverted eyes!
 Or hear their names with ears that tingle not 375
 With blood of indignation, rage, and shame!—
 This is a perilous liquor;—good my Lords.—

[SWELLFOOT approaches to touch the GREEN BAG.

Beware! for God's sake, beware!—if you should break
 The seal, and touch the fatal liquor——

Purganax. There,
 Give it to me. I have been used to handle 380
 All sorts of poisons. His dread Majesty
 Only desires to see the colour of it.

Mammon. Now, with a little common sense, my Lords,
 Only undoing all that has been done
 (Yet so as it may seem we but confirm it), 385
 Our victory is assured. We must entice
 Her Majesty from the sty, and make the Pigs
 Believe that the contents of the GREEN BAG
 Are the true test of guilt or innocence.
 And that, if she be guilty, 'twill transform her 390
 To manifest deformity like guilt.
 If innocent, she will become transfigured
 Into an angel, such as they say she is;
 And they will see her flying through the air,
 So bright that she will dim the noonday sun; 395
 Showering down blessings in the shape of comfits.
 This, trust a priest, is just the sort of thing
 Swine will believe. I'll wager you will see them
 Climbing upon the thatch of their low sties,
 With pieces of smoked glass, to watch her sail 400
 Among the clouds, and some will hold the flaps
 Of one another's ears between their teeth,
 To catch the coming hail of comfits in.
 You, Purganax, who have the gift o' the gab,
 Make them a solemn speech to this effect: 405
 I go to put in readiness the feast
 Kept to the honour of our goddess Famine,
 Where, for more glory, let the ceremony
 Take place of the uglification of the Queen.

Dakry (to SWELLFOOT). I, as the keeper of your sacred conscience,

Humbly remind your Majesty that the care
Of your high office, as Man-milliner
To red Bellona, should not be deferred.

411

Purganax. All part, in happier plight to meet again. [*Exeunt.*

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II

SCENE I.—*The Public Sty. The BOARS in full Assembly.*

Enter PURGANAX.

Purganax. Grant me your patience, Gentlemen and Boars,
Ye, by whose patience under public burthens
The glorious constitution of these sties
Subsists, and shall subsist. The Lean-Pig rates
Grow with the growing populace of Swine, 5
The taxes, that true source of Piggishness
(How can I find a more appropriate term
To include religion, morals, peace, and plenty,
And all that fit Boeotia as a nation
To teach the other nations how to live?), 10
Increase with Piggishness itself; and still
Does the revenue, that great spring of all
The patronage, and pensions, and by-payments,
Which free-born Pigs regard with jealous eyes,
Diminish, till at length, by glorious steps, 15
All the land's produce will be merged in taxes,
And the revenue will amount to—nothing!
The failure of a foreign market for
Sausages, bristles, and blood-puddings,
And such home manufactures, is but partial; 20
And, that the population of the Pigs,
Instead of hog-wash, has been fed on straw
And water, is a fact which is—you know—
That is—it is a state-necessity—
Temporary, of course. Those impious Pigs, 25
Who, by frequent squeaks, have dared impugn
The settled Swellfoot system, or to make
Irreverent mockery of the genuflexions
Inculcated by the arch-priest, have been whipped
Into a loyal and an orthodox whine. 30
Things being in this happy state, the Queen
Iona—

[*A loud cry from the PIGS.* She is innocent! most innocent!

Purganax. That is the very thing that I was saying,
Gentlemen Swine; the Queen Iona being
Most innocent, no doubt, returns to Thebes, 35
And the lean Sows and Boars collect about her,

Wishing to make her think that we believe
 (I mean those more substantial Pigs, who swill
 Rich hog-wash, while the others mouth damp straw)
 That she is guilty; thus, the Lean-Pig faction
 Seeks to obtain that hog-wash, which has been
 Your immemorial right, and which I will
 Maintain you in to the last drop of——

40

A Boar (interrupting him). What
 Does any one accuse her of?

Purganax. Why, no one
 Makes *any* positive accusation;—but
 There were hints dropped, and so the privy wizards
 Conceived that it became them to advise
 His Majesty to investigate their truth;—
 Not for his own sake; he could be content
 To let his wife play any pranks she pleased,
 If, by that sufferance, *he* could please the Pigs;
 But then he fears the morals of the Swine,
 The Sows especially, and what effect
 It might produce upon the purity and
 Religion of the rising generation
 Of Sucking-Pigs, if it could be suspected
 That Queen Iona——

45

50

55

[*A pause.*

First Boar. Well, go on; we long
 To hear what she can possibly have done.

Purganax. Why, it is hinted, that a certain Bull—
 Thus much is *known*:—the milk-white Bulls that feed
 Beside Clitumnus and the crystal lakes
 Of the Cisalpine mountains, in fresh dews
 Of lotus-grass and blossoming asphodel
 Sleeking their silken hair, and with sweet breath
 Loading the morning winds until they faint
 With living fragrance, are so beautiful!—
 Well, *I* say nothing;—but Europa rode
 On such a one from Asia into Crete,
 And the enamoured sea grew calm beneath
 His gliding beauty. And Pasiphae,
 Iona's grandmother,——but *she* is innocent!
 And that both you and I, and all assert.

60

65

70

First Boar. Most innocent!

Purganax. Behold this BAG; a bag——

Second Boar. Oh! no GREEN BAGS!! Jealousy's eyes are green,
 Scorpions are green, and water-snakes, and efts,
 And verdigris, and——

75

Purganax. Honourable Swine,
 In Piggish souls can prepossessions reign?
 Allow me to remind you, grass is green—
 All flesh is grass;—no bacon but is flesh—
 Ye are but bacon. This divining BAG
 (Which is not green, but only bacon colour)

80

Is filled with liquor, which if sprinkled o'er
 A woman guilty of—we all know what—
 Makes her so hideous, till she finds one blind
 She never can commit the like again. 85
 If innocent, she will turn into an angel,
 And rain down blessings in the shape of comfits
 As she flies up to heaven. Now, my proposal
 Is to convert her sacred Majesty
 Into an angel (as I am sure we shall do),
 By pouring on her head this mystic water. [Showing the Bag. 90
 I know that she is innocent; I wish
 Only to prove her so to all the world.

First Boar. Excellent, just, and noble Purganax.

Second Boar. How glorious it will be to see her Majesty 95
 Flying above our heads, her petticoats
 Streaming like—like—like—

Third Boar. Anything.

Purganax. Oh no!

But like a standard of an admiral's ship,
 Or like the banner of a conquering host,
 Or like a cloud dyed in the dying day, 100
 Unravelled on the blast from a white mountain;
 Or like a meteor, or a war-steed's mane,
 Or waterfall from a dizzy precipice
 Scattered upon the wind.

First Boar. Or a cow's tail.

Second Boar. Or anything, as the learned Boar observed. 105

Purganax. Gentlemen Boars, I move a resolution,
 That her most sacred Majesty should be
 Invited to attend the feast of Famine,
 And to receive upon her chaste white body
 Dews of Apotheosis from this BAG. 110

[A great confusion is heard of the PIGS OUT OF DOORS, which communicates itself to those within. During the first Strophe, the doors of the Sty are staved in, and a number of exceedingly lean PIGS and SOWS and BOARS rush in.

Semichorus I.

No! Yes!

Semichorus II.

Yes! No!

Semichorus I.

A law!

Semichorus II.

A flaw!

Semichorus I.

Porkers, we shall lose our wash,
 Or must share it with the Lean-Pigs!

First Boar.

Order! order! be not rash!
Was there ever such a scene, Pigs!

An old Sow (rushing in).

I never saw so fine a dash
Since I first began to wean Pigs.

120

Second Boar (solemnly).

The Queen will be an angel time enough.
I vote, in form of an amendment, that
Purganax rub a little of that stuff
Upon his face.

Purganax (his heart is seen to beat through his waistcoat).
Gods! What would ye be at?

Semichorus I.

Purganax has plainly shown a
Cloven foot and jackdaw feather.

125

Semichorus II.

I vote Swellfoot and Iona
Try the magic test together;
Whenever royal spouses bicker,
Both should try the magic liquor.

130

An Old Boar (aside).

A miserable state is that of Pigs,
For if their drivers would tear caps and wigs,
The Swine must bite each other's ear therefore.

An old Sow (aside).

A wretched lot Jove has assigned to Swine,
Squabbling makes Pig-herds hungry, and they dine
On bacon, and whip Sucking-Pigs the more.

135

Chorus.

Hog-wash has been ta'en away:
If the Bull-Queen is divested,
We shall be in every way
Hunted, stripped, exposed, molested;
Let us do whate'er we may,
That she shall not be arrested.

140

QUEEN, we entrench you with walls of brawn,
And palisades of tusks, sharp as a bayonet:
Place your most sacred person here. We pawn
Our lives that none a finger dare to lay on it.

145

Those who wrong you, wrong us;
Those who hate you, hate us;
Those who sting you, sting us;
Those who bait you, bait us;

150

The *oracle* is now about to be
 Fulfilled by circumvolving destiny;
 Which says: 'Thebes, choose *reform* or *civil war*,
 When through your streets, instead of hare with dogs,
 A CONSORT QUEEN shall hunt a KING with Hogs,
 Riding upon the IONIAN MINOTAUR.'

155

Enter IONA TAURINA.

Iona Taurina (*coming forward*). Gentlemen Swine, and gentle Lady-Pigs,

The tender heart of every Boar acquits
 Their QUEEN, of any act incongruous
 With native Piggishness, and she, reposing
 With confidence upon the grunting nation,
 Has thrown herself, her cause, her life, her all,
 Her innocence, into their Hoggish arms;
 Nor has the expectation been deceived
 Of finding shelter there. Yet know, great Boars,
 (For such whoever lives among you finds you,
 And so do I), the innocent are proud!
 I have accepted your protection only
 In compliment of your kind love and care,
 Not for necessity. The innocent
 Are safest there where trials and dangers wait;
 Innocent Queens o'er white-hot ploughshares tread
 Unsinged, and ladies, Erin's laureate sings it¹,
 Decked with rare gems, and beauty rarer still,
 Walked from Killarney to the Giant's Causeway,
 Through rebels, smugglers, troops of yeomanry,
 White-boys and Orange-boys, and constables,
 Tithe-proctors, and excise people, uninjured!
 Thus I!—

160

165

170

175

Lord PURGANAX, I do commit myself
 Into your custody, and am prepared
 To stand the test, whatever it may be!

180

Purganax. This magnanimity in your sacred Majesty
 Must please the Pigs. You cannot fail of being
 A heavenly angel. Smoke your bits of glass,
 Ye loyal Swine, or her transfiguration
 Will blind your wondering eyes.

185

An old Boar (*aside*). Take care, my Lord,
 They do not smoke you first.

Purganax. At the approaching feast
 Of Famine, let the expiation be.

Swine. Content! content!

Iona Taurina (*aside*). I, most content of all,
 Know that my foes even thus prepare their fall!

190

[*Exeunt omnes.*]

154 streets instead *ed.* 1820.

¹ 'Rich and rare were the gems she wore.' See *Moore's Irish Melodies*.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

SCENE II.—*The interior of the Temple of Famine. The statue of the Goddess, a skeleton clothed in parti-coloured rags, seated upon a heap of skulls and loaves intermingled. A number of exceedingly fat Priests in black garments arrayed on each side, with marrow-bones and cleavers in their hands. [SOLOMON, the Court Porkman.] A flourish of trumpets.*

Enter MAMMON as arch-priest, SWELLFOOT, DAKRY, PURGANAX, LAOCTONOS, followed by IONA TAURINA guarded. On the other side enter the SWINE.

Chorus of PRIESTS, accompanied by the COURT PORKMAN on marrow-bones and cleavers.

GODDESS bare, and gaunt, and pale,
Empress of the world, all hail!
What though Cretans old called thee
City-crested Cybele?

We call thee FAMINE!

5

Goddess of fasts and feasts, starving and cramming!
Through thee, for emperors, kings, and priests and lords,
Who rule by viziers, sceptres, bank-notes, words,

The earth pours forth its plenteous fruits,
Corn, wool, linen, flesh, and roots—

10

Those who consume these fruits through thee grow fat,
Those who produce these fruits through thee grow lean,
Whatever change takes place, oh, stick to that!

And let things be as they have ever been;

At least while we remain thy priests,

15

And proclaim thy fasts and feasts.

Through thee the sacred SWELLFOOT dynasty
Is based upon a rock amid that sea

Whose waves are Swine—so let it ever be!

[SWELLFOOT, etc., seat themselves at a table magnificently covered at the upper end of the Temple. Attendants pass over the stage with hog-wash in pails. A number of PIGS, exceedingly lean, follow them licking up the wash.

Mammon. I fear your sacred Majesty has lost
The appetite which you were used to have.
Allow me now to recommend this dish—
A simple kickshaw by your Persian cook,
Such as is served at the great King's second table.
The price and pains which its ingredients cost
Might have maintained some dozen families
A winter or two—not more—so plain a dish
Could scarcely disagree.—

20

Swellfoot.

After the trial,
And these fastidious Pigs are gone, perhaps
I may recover my lost appetite,—
I feel the gout flying about my stomach—
Give me a glass of Maraschino punch.

25

30

Purganax (*filling his glass, and standing up*). The glorious Constitution of the Pigs!

All. A toast! a toast! stand up, and three times three!

Dakry. No heel-taps—darken daylight!—

Laoctonos.

Claret, somehow,

35

Puts me in mind of blood, and blood of claret!

Swellfoot. Laoctonos is fishing for a compliment,

But 'tis his due. Yes, you have drunk more wine,

And shed more blood, than any man in Thebes.

[*To PURGANAX*.

For God's sake stop the grunting of those Pigs!

40

Purganax. We dare not, Sire, 'tis Famine's privilege.

Chorus of Swine.

Hail to thee, hail to thee, Famine!

Thy throne is on blood, and thy robe is of rags;

Thou devil which livest on damning;

Saint of new churches, and cant, and GREEN BAGS,

45

Till in pity and terror thou risest,

Confounding the schemes of the wisest;

When thou liftest thy skeleton form,

When the loaves and the skulls roll about,

We will greet thee—the voice of a storm

50

Would be lost in our terrible shout!

Then hail to thee, hail to thee, Famine!

Hail to thee, Empress of Earth!

When thou risest, dividing possessions;

When thou risest, uprooting oppressions,

55

In the pride of thy ghastly mirth;

Over palaces, temples, and graves,

We will rush as thy minister-slaves,

Trampling behind in thy train,

Till all be made level again!

60

Mammon. I hear a crackling of the giant bones

Of the dread image, and in the black pits

Which once were eyes, I see two livid flames.

These prodigies are oracular, and show

The presence of the unseen Deity.

65

Mighty events are hastening to their doom!

Swellfoot. I only hear the lean and mutinous Swine

Grunting about the temple.

Dakry.

In a crisis

Of such exceeding delicacy, I think

We ought to put her Majesty, the QUEEN,

70

Upon her trial without delay.

Mammon.

THE BAG

Is here.

Purganax. I have rehearsed the entire scene

With an ox-bladder and some ditchwater,

On Lady P——; it cannot fail. (*Taking up the Bag.*) Your Majesty
[To SWELLFOOT.

In such a filthy business had better
Stand on one side, lest it should sprinkle you.
A spot or two on me would do no harm,
Nay, it might hide the blood, which the sad Genius
Of the Green Isle has fixed, as by a spell,
Upon my brow—which would stain all its seas,
But which those seas could never wash away!

Iona Taurina. My Lord, I am ready—nay, I am impatient
To undergo the test.

[*A graceful figure in a semi-transparent veil passes unnoticed through the Temple; the word LIBERTY is seen through the veil, as if it were written in fire upon its forehead. Its words are almost drowned in the furious grunting of the PIGS, and the business of the trial. She kneels on the steps of the Altar, and speaks in tones at first faint and low, but which ever become louder and louder.*

Mighty Empress! Death's white wife!
Ghastly mother-in-law of Life!

By the God who made thee such,
By the magic of thy touch,

By the starving and the cramming

Of fasts and feasts! by thy dread self, O Famine!

I charge thee! when thou wake the multitude,

Thou lead them not upon the paths of blood.

The earth did never mean her foison

For those who crown life's cup with poison

Of fanatic rage and meaningless revenge—

But for those radiant spirits, who are still

The standard-bearers in the van of Change.

Be they th' appointed stewards, to fill

The lap of Pain, and Toil, and Age!—

Remit, O Queen! thy accustomed rage!

Be what thou art not! In voice faint and low

FREEDOM calls *Famine*,—her eternal foe,

To brief alliance, hollow truce.—Rise now!

[*Whilst the Veiled Figure has been chanting this strophe, MAMMON, DAKRY, LAOCTONOS, and SWELLFOOT, have surrounded IONA TAURINA, who, with her hands folded on her breast, and her eyes lifted to Heaven, stands, as with saint-like resignation, to wait the issue of the business, in perfect confidence of her innocence.*

[*PURGANAX, after unsealing the GREEN BAG, is gravely about to pour the liquor upon her head, when suddenly the whole expression of her figure and countenance changes; she snatches it from his hand with a loud laugh of triumph, and empties it over SWELLFOOT and his whole Court, who are instantly changed into a number of filthy and ugly animals, and rush out of the Temple. The image of FAMINE then arises with a tremendous sound, the PIGS begin scrambling for the loaves, and are*

tripped up by the skulls; all those who EAT the loaves are turned into BULLS, and arrange themselves quietly behind the altar. The image of FAMINE sinks through a chasm in the earth, and a MINOTAUR rises.

Minotaur. I am the Ionian Minotaur, the mightiest
Of all Europa's taurine progeny—
I am the old traditional Man-Bull; 105
And from my ancestors having been Ionian,
I am called Ion, which, by interpretation,
Is JOHN; in plain Theban, that is to say,
My name's JOHN BULL; I am a famous hunter,
And can leap any gate in all Boeotia, 110
Even the palings of the royal park,
Or double ditch about the new enclosures;
And if your Majesty will deign to mount me,
At least till you have hunted down your game,
I will not throw you. 115

Iona Taurina. (*During this speech she has been putting on boots and spurs, and a hunting-cap, buckishly cocked on one side, and tucking up her hair, she leaps nimbly on his back.*) Ho!
hoa! tallyho! tallyho! ho! ho!

Come, let us hunt these ugly badgers down,
These stinking foxes, these devouring otters,
These hares, these wolves, these anything but men.
Hey, for a whipper-in! my loyal Pigs,
Now let your noses be as keen as beagles', 120
Your steps as swift as greyhounds', and your cries
More dulcet and symphonious than the bells
Of village-towers, on sunshine holiday;
Wake all the dewy woods with jangling music.
Give them no law (are they not beasts of blood?) 125
But such as they gave you. Tallyho! ho!
Through forest, furze, and bog, and den, and desert,
Pursue the ugly beasts! tallyho! ho!

Full Chorus of IONA and the SWINE.

Tallyho! tallyho!
Through rain, hail, and snow, 130
Through brake, gorse, and briar,
Through fen, flood, and mire,
We go! we go!

Tallyho! tallyho!
Through pond, ditch, and slough, 135
Wind them, and find them,
Like the Devil behind them,
Tallyho! tallyho!

[*Exeunt, in full cry; IONA driving on the SWINE, with the empty GREEN BAG.*

THE END.

NOTE ON OEDIPUS TYRANNUS, BY MRS. SHELLEY

IN the brief journal I kept in those days, I find recorded, in August, 1820, Shelley 'begins *Swellfoot the Tyrant*, suggested by the pigs at the fair of San Giuliano.' This was the period of Queen Caroline's landing in England, and the struggles made by George IV to get rid of her claims; which failing, Lord Castlereagh placed the '*Green Bag*' on the table of the House of Commons, demanding in the King's name that an inquiry should be instituted into his wife's conduct. These circumstances were the theme of all conversation among the English. We were then at the Baths of San Giuliano. A friend came to visit us on the day when a fair was held in the square, beneath our windows: Shelley read to us his *Ode to Liberty*; and was riotously accompanied by the grunting of a quantity of pigs brought for sale to the fair. He compared it to the 'chorus of frogs' in the satiric drama of Aristophanes; and, it being an hour of merriment, and one ludicrous association suggesting another, he imagined a political-satirical drama on the circumstances of the day, to which the pigs would serve as chorus—and *Swellfoot* was begun. When finished, it was transmitted to England, printed, and published anonymously; but stifled at the very dawn of its existence by the Society for the Suppression of Vice, who threatened to prosecute it, if not immediately withdrawn. The friend who had taken the trouble of bringing it out, of course did not think it worth the annoyance and expense of a contest, and it was laid aside.

Hesitation of whether it would do honour to Shelley prevented my publishing it at first. But I cannot bring myself to keep back anything he ever wrote; for each word is fraught with the peculiar views and sentiments which he believed to be beneficial to the human race, and the bright light of poetry irradiates every thought. The world has a right to the entire compositions of such a man; for it does not live and thrive by the outworn lesson of the dullard or the hypocrite, but by the original free thoughts of men of genius, who aspire to pluck bright truth

'from the pale-faced moon;
Or dive into the bottom of the deep
Where fathom-line could never touch the ground,
And pluck up drowned'

truth. Even those who may dissent from his opinions will consider that he was a man of genius, and that the world will take more interest in his slightest word than in the waters of Lethe which are so eagerly prescribed as medicinal for all its wrongs and woe. This drama, however, must not be judged for more than was meant. It is a mere plaything of the imagination; which even may not excite smiles among many, who will not see wit in those combinations of thought which were full of the ridiculous to the author. But, like everything he wrote, it breathes that deep sympathy for the sorrows of humanity, and indignation against its oppressors, which make it worthy of his name.

EPIPSYCHIDION

VERSES ADDRESSED TO THE NOBLE AND UNFORTUNATE
LADY, EMILIA V—,

NOW IMPRISONED IN THE CONVENT OF —

L'anima amante si slancia fuori del creato, e si crea nell' infinito un Mondo tutto per
essa, diverso assai da questo oscuro e pauroso baratro. HER OWN WORDS.

[*Epipsychidion* was composed at Pisa, Jan., Feb., 1821, and published without the author's name, in the following summer, by C. & J. Ollier, London. The poem was included by Mrs. Shelley in the *Poetical Works*, 1839, both edd. Amongst the Shelley MSS. in the Bodleian is a first draft of *Epipsychidion*, 'consisting of three versions, more or less complete, of the Preface [*Advertisement*], a version in ink and pencil, much cancelled, of the last eighty lines of the poem, and some additional lines which did not appear in print' (*Examination of the Shelley MSS. in the Bodleian Library*, by C. D. Locock. Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1903, p. 3). This draft, the writing of which is 'extraordinarily confused and illegible,' has been carefully deciphered and printed by Mr. Locock in the volume named above. Our text follows that of the *editio princeps*, 1821.]

ADVERTISEMENT

THE Writer of the following lines died at Florence, as he was preparing for a voyage to one of the wildest of the Sporades, which he had bought, and where he had fitted up the ruins of an old building, and where it was his hope to have realised a scheme of life, suited perhaps to that happier and better world of which he is now an inhabitant, but hardly practicable in this. His life was singular; less on account of the romantic vicissitudes which diversified it, than the ideal tinge which it received from his own character and feelings. The present Poem, like the *Vita Nuova* of Dante, is sufficiently intelligible to a certain class of readers without a matter-of-fact history of the circumstances to which it relates; and to a certain other class it must ever remain incomprehensible, from a defect of a common organ of perception for the ideas of which it treats. Not but that *gran vergogna sarebbe a colui, che rimasse cosa sotto veste di figura, o di colore rettorico: e domandato non sapesse denudare le sue parole da cotai veste, in guisa che avessero verace intendimento*.

The present poem appears to have been intended by the Writer as the dedication to some longer one. The stanza on the opposite page¹ is almost a literal translation from Dante's famous Canzone

Voi, ch' intendendo, il terzo ciel movete, etc.

The presumptuous application of the concluding lines to his own composition will raise a smile at the expense of my unfortunate friend: be it a smile not of contempt, but pity. S.

My Song, I fear that thou wilt find but few
Who fitly shall conceive thy reasoning,
Of such hard matter dost thou entertain;
Whence, if by misadventure, chance should bring
Thee to base company (as chance may do),

5

¹ i.e. the nine lines which follow, beginning, 'My Song, I fear,' etc.—ED.

Quite unaware of what thou dost contain,
 I prithee, comfort thy sweet self again,
 My last delight! tell them that they are dül,
 And bid them own that thou art beautiful.

EPIPSYCHIDION

SWEET Spirit! Sister of that orphan one,
 Whose empire is the name thou weepest on,
 In my heart's temple I suspend to thee
 These votive wreaths of withered memory.

Poor captive bird! who, from thy narrow cage, 5
 Pourest such music, that it might assuage
 The rugged hearts of those who prisoned thee,
 Were they not deaf to all sweet melody;
 This song shall be thy rose: its petals pale 10
 Are dead, indeed, my adored Nightingale!
 But soft and fragrant is the faded blossom,
 And it has no thorn left to wound thy bosom.

High, spirit-wingèd Heart! who dost for ever
 Beat thine unfeeling bars with vain endeavour,
 Till those bright plumes of thought, in which arrayed 15
 It over-soared this low and worldly shade,
 Lie shattered; and thy panting, wounded breast
 Stains with dear blood its unmaternal nest!
 I weep vain tears: blood would less bitter be,
 Yet poured forth gladder, could it profit thee. 20

Seraph of Heaven! too gentle to be human,
 Veiling beneath that radiant form of Woman
 All that is insupportable in thee
 Of light, and love, and immortality!
 Sweet Benediction in the eternal Curse! 25
 Veiled Glory of this lampless Universe!
 Thou Moon beyond the clouds! Thou living Form
 Among the Dead! Thou Star above the Storm!
 Thou Wonder, and thou Beauty, and thou Terror!
 Thou Harmony of Nature's art! Thou Mirror 30
 In whom, as in the splendour of the Sun,
 All shapes look glorious which thou gazest on!
 Ay, even the dim words which obscure thee now
 Flash, lightning-like, with unaccustomed glow;
 I pray thee that thou blot from this sad song 35
 All of its much mortality and wrong,
 With those clear drops, which start like sacred dew
 From the twin lights thy sweet soul darkens through,
 Weeping, till sorrow becomes ecstasy:
 Then smile on it, so that it may not die. 40

I never thought before my death to see
 Youth's vision thus made perfect. Emily,
 I love thee; though the world by no thin name
 Will hide that love from its unvalued shame.
 Would we two had been twins of the same mother! 45
 Or, that the name my heart lent to another
 Could be a sister's bond for her and thee,
 Blending two beams of one eternity!
 Yet were one lawful and the other true,
 These names, though dear, could paint not, as is due, 50
 How beyond refuge I am thine. Ah me!
 I am not thine: I am a part of *thee*.

Sweet Lamp! my moth-like Muse has burned its wings
 Or, like a dying swan who soars and sings,
 Young Love should teach Time, in his own gray style, 55
 All that thou art. Art thou not void of guile,
 A lovely soul formed to be blessed and bless?
 A well of sealed and secret happiness,
 Whose waters like blithe light and music are,
 Vanquishing dissonance and gloom? A Star 60
 Which moves not in the moving heavens, alone?
 A Smile amid dark frowns? a gentle tone
 Amid rude voices? a beloved light?
 A Solitude, a Refuge, a Delight?
 A Lute, which those whom Love has taught to play 65
 Make music on, to soothe the roughest day
 And lull fond Grief asleep? a buried treasure?
 A cradle of young thoughts of wingless pleasure?
 A violet-shrouded grave of Woe?—I measure
 The world of fancies, seeking one like thee, 70
 And find—alas! mine own infirmity.

She met me, Stranger, upon life's rough way,
 And lured me towards sweet Death; as Night by Day,
 Winter by Spring, or Sorrow by swift Hope,
 Led into light, life, peace. An antelope, 75
 In the suspended impulse of its lightness,
 Were less aethereally light: the brightness
 Of her divinest presence trembles through
 Her limbs, as underneath a cloud of dew
 Embodied in the windless heaven of June 80
 Amid the splendour-wingèd stars, the Moon
 Burns, inextinguishably beautiful:
 And from her lips, as from a hyacinth full
 Of honey-dew, a liquid murmur drops,
 Killing the sense with passion; sweet as stops 85
 Of planetary music heard in trance.
 In her mild lights the starry spirits dance,
 The sunbeams of those wells which ever leap
 Under the lightnings of the soul—too deep

For the brief fathom-line of thought or sense. 90
 The glory of her being, issuing thence,
 Stains the dead, blank, cold air with a warm shade
 Of unentangled intermixture, made
 By Love, of light and motion: one intense
 Diffusion, one serene Omnipresence, 95
 Whose flowing outlines mingle in their flowing,
 Around her cheeks and utmost fingers glowing
 With the unintermitted blood, which there
 Quivers, (as in a fleece of snow-like air
 The crimson pulse of living morning quiver,) 100
 Continuously prolonged, and ending never,
 Till they are lost, and in that Beauty furled
 Which penetrates and clasps and fills the world;
 Scarce visible from extreme loveliness.
 Warm fragrance seems to fall from her light dress 105
 And her loose hair; and where some heavy tress
 The air of her own speed has disentwined,
 The sweetness seems to satiate the faint wind;
 And in the soul a wild odour is felt,
 Beyond the sense, like fiery dews that melt 110
 Into the bosom of a frozen bud.—
 See where she stands! a mortal shape indued
 With love and life and light and deity,
 And motion which may change but cannot die;
 An image of some bright Eternity; 115
 A shadow of some golden dream; a Splendour
 Leaving the third sphere pilotless; a tender
 Reflection of the eternal Moon of Love
 Under whose motions life's dull billows move;
 A Metaphor of Spring and Youth and Morning; 120
 A Vision like incarnate April, warning,
 With smiles and tears, Frost the Anatomy
 Into his summer grave.

Ah, woe is me!
 What have I dared? where am I lifted? how
 Shall I descend, and perish not? I know 125
 That Love makes all things equal: I have heard
 By mine own heart this joyous truth averred:
 The spirit of the worm beneath the sod
 In love and worship, blends itself with God.

Spouse! Sister! Angel! Pilot of the Fate 130
 Whose course has been so starless! O too late
 Belovèd! O too soon adored, by me!
 For in the fields of Immortality
 My spirit should at first have worshipped thine,
 A divine presence in a place divine; 135
 Or should have moved beside it on this earth,
 A shadow of that substance, from its birth;

But not as now:—I love thee ; yes, I feel
 That on the fountain of my heart a seal
 Is set, to keep its waters pure and bright 140
 For thee, since in those *tears* thou hast delight.
 We—are we not formed, as notes of music are,
 For one another, though dissimilar ;
 Such difference without discord, as can make
 Those sweetest sounds, in which all spirits shake 145
 As trembling leaves in a continuous air ?

Thy wisdom speaks in me, and bids me dare
 Beacon the rocks on which high hearts are wrecked.
 I never was attached to that great sect,
 Whose doctrine is, that each one should select 150
 Out of the crowd a mistress or a friend,
 And all the rest, though fair and wise, commend
 To cold oblivion, though it is in the code
 Of modern morals, and the beaten road
 Which those poor slaves with weary footsteps tread, 155
 Who travel to their home among the dead
 By the broad highway of the world, and so
 With one chained friend, perhaps a jealous foe,
 The dreariest and the longest journey go.

True Love in this differs from gold and clay, 160
 That to divide is not to take away.
 Love is like understanding, that grows bright,
 Gazing on many truths ; 'tis like thy light,
 Imagination ! which from earth and sky,
 And from the depths of human fantasy, 165
 As from a thousand prisms and mirrors, fills
 The Universe with glorious beams, and kills
 Error, the worm, with many a sun-like arrow
 Of its reverberated lightning. Narrow
 The heart that loves, the brain that contemplates, 170
 The life that wears, the spirit that creates
 One object, and one form, and builds thereby
 A sepulchre for its eternity.

Mind from its object differs most in this :
 Evil from good ; misery from happiness ; 175
 The baser from the nobler ; the impure
 And frail, from what is clear and must endure.
 If you divide suffering and dross, you may
 Diminish till it is consumed away ;
 If you divide pleasure and love and thought, 180
 Each part exceeds the whole ; and we know not
 How much, while any yet remains unshared,
 Of pleasure may be gained, of sorrow spared :
 This truth is that deep well, whence sages draw
 The unenvied light of hope ; the eternal law 185

By which those live, to whom this world of life
Is as a garden ravaged, and whose strife
Tills for the promise of a later birth
The wilderness of this Elysian earth.

There was a Being whom my spirit oft 190
Met on its visioned wanderings, far aloft,
In the clear golden prime of my youth's dawn,
Upon the fairy isles of sunny lawn,
Amid the enchanted mountains, and the caves
Of divine sleep, and on the air-like waves 195
Of wonder-level dream, whose tremulous floor
Paved her light steps ;—on an imagined shore,
Under the gray beak of some promontory
She met me, robed in such exceeding glory,
That I beheld her not. In solitudes 200
Her voice came to me through the whispering woods,
And from the fountains, and the odours deep
Of flowers, which, like lips murmuring in their sleep
Of the sweet kisses which had lulled them there,
Breathed but of *her* to the enamoured air ; 205
And from the breezes whether low or loud,
And from the rain of every passing cloud,
And from the singing of the summer-birds,
And from all sounds, all silence. In the words
Of antique verse and high romance,—in form, 210
Sound, colour—in whatever checks that Storm
Which with the shattered present chokes the past ;
And in that best philosophy, whose taste
Makes this cold common hell, our life, a doom
As glorious as a fiery martyrdom ; 215
Her Spirit was the harmony of truth.—

Then, from the caverns of my dreamy youth
I sprang, as one sandalled with plumes of fire,
And towards the lodestar of my one desire,
I flitted, like a dizzy moth, whose flight 220
Is as a dead leaf's in the owlet light,
When it would seek in Hesper's setting sphere
A radiant death, a fiery sepulchre,
As if it were a lamp of earthly flame.—
But She, whom prayers or tears then could not tame, 225
Passed, like a God throned on a wingèd planet,
Whose burning plumes to tenfold swiftness fan it,
Into the dreary cone of our life's shade ;
And as a man with mighty loss dismayed,
I would have followed, though the grave between 230
Yawned like a gulf whose spectres are unseen :
When a voice said :—' O thou of hearts the weakest,
The phantom is beside thee whom thou seekest.'

Then I—'Where?'—the world's echo answered 'where?'
 And in that silence, and in my despair, 235
 I questioned every tongueless wind that flew
 Over my tower of mourning, if it knew
 Whither 'twas fled, this soul out of my soul;
 And murmured names and spells which have control
 Over the sightless tyrants of our fate; 240
 But neither prayer nor verse could dissipate
 The night which closed on her; nor uncreate
 That world within this Chaos, mine and me,
 Of which she was the veiled Divinity,
 The world I say of thoughts that worshipped her: 245
 And therefore I went forth, with hope and fear
 And every gentle passion sick to death,
 Feeding my course with expectation's breath,
 Into the wintry forest of our life;
 And struggling through its error with vain strife, 250
 And stumbling in my weakness and my haste,
 And half bewildered by new forms, I passed,
 Seeking among those untaught foresters
 If I could find one form resembling hers,
 In which she might have masked herself from me. 255
 There,—One, whose voice was venom'd melody
 Sate by a well, under blue nightshade bowers;
 The breath of her false mouth was like faint flowers,
 Her touch was as electric poison,—flame
 Out of her looks into my vitals came, 260
 And from her living cheeks and bosom flew
 A killing air, which pierced like honey-dew
 Into the core of my green heart, and lay
 Upon its leaves; until, as hair grown gray
 O'er a young brow, they hid its unblown prime 265
 With ruins of unseasonable time.

In many mortal forms I rashly sought
 The shadow of that idol of my thought.
 And some were fair—but beauty dies away:
 Others were wise—but honeyed words betray: 270
 And One was true—oh! why not true to me?
 Then, as a hunted deer that could not flee,
 I turned upon my thoughts, and stood at bay,
 Wounded and weak and panting; the cold day
 Trembled, for pity of my strife and pain. 275
 When, like a noonday dawn, there shone again
 Deliverance. One stood on my path who seemed
 As like the glorious shape which I had dreamed
 As is the Moon, whose changes ever run
 Into themselves, to the eternal Sun; 280
 The cold chaste Moon, the Queen of Heaven's bright isles,
 Who makes all beautiful on which she smiles,

That wandering shrine of soft yet icy flame
 Which ever is transformed, yet still the same,
 And warms not but illumines. Young and fair 285
 As the descended Spirit of that sphere,
 She hid me, as the Moon may hide the night
 From its own darkness, until all was bright
 Between the Heaven and Earth of my calm mind,
 And, as a cloud charioted by the wind, 290
 She led me to a cave in that wild place,
 And sate beside me, with her downward face
 Illumining my slumbers, like the Moon
 Waxing and waning o'er Endymion.
 And I was laid asleep, spirit and limb, 295
 And all my being became bright or dim
 As the Moon's image in a summer sea,
 According as she smiled or frowned on me;
 And there I lay, within a chaste cold bed:
 Alas, I then was nor alive nor dead:— 300
 For at her silver voice came Death and Life,
 Unmindful each of their accustomed strife,
 Masked like twin babes, a sister and a brother,
 The wandering hopes of one abandoned mother,
 And through the cavern without wings they flew, 305
 And cried 'Away, he is not of our crew.'
 I wept, and though it be a dream, I weep.

What storms then shook the ocean of my sleep,
 Blotting that Moon, whose pale and waning lips
 Then shrank as in the sickness of eclipse;— 310
 And how my soul was as a lampless sea,
 And who was then its Tempest; and when She,
 The Planet of that hour, was quenched, what frost
 Crept o'er those waters, till from coast to coast
 The moving billows of my being fell 315
 Into a death of ice, immovable;—
 And then—what earthquakes made it gape and split,
 The white Moon smiling all the while on it,
 These words conceal:—If not, each word would be
 The key of staunchless tears. Weep not for me! 320

At length, into the obscure Forest came
 The Vision I had sought through grief and shame.
 Athwart that wintry wilderness of thorns
 Flashed from her motion splendour like the Morn's,
 And from her presence life was radiated 325
 Through the gray earth and branches bare and dead;
 So that her way was paved, and roofed above
 With flowers as soft as thoughts of budding love;
 And music from her respiration spread
 Like light,—all other sounds were penetrated 330

By the small, still, sweet spirit of that sound,
 So that the savage winds hung mute around;
 And odours warm and fresh fell from her hair
 Dissolving the dull cold in the frore air:
 Soft as an Incarnation of the Sun, 335
 When light is changed to love, this glorious One
 Floated into the cavern where I lay,
 And called my Spirit, and the dreaming clay
 Was lifted by the thing that dreamed below
 As smoke by fire, and in her beauty's glow 340
 I stood, and felt the dawn of my long night
 Was penetrating me with living light:
 I knew it was the Vision veiled from me
 So many years—that it was Emily.

Twin Spheres of light who rule this passive Earth, 345
 This world of love, this *me*; and into birth
 Awaken all its fruits and flowers, and dart
 Magnetic might into its central heart;
 And lift its billows and its mists, and guide
 By everlasting laws, each wind and tide 350
 To its fit cloud, and its appointed cave;
 And lull its storms, each in the craggy grave
 Which was its cradle, luring to faint bowers
 The armies of the rainbow-wingèd showers;
 And, as those married lights, which from the towers 355
 Of Heaven look forth and fold the wandering globe
 In liquid sleep and splendour, as a robe;
 And all their many-mingled influence blend,
 If equal, yet unlike, to one sweet end;—
 So ye, bright regents, with alternate sway 360
 Govern my sphere of being, night and day!
 Thou, not disdaining even a borrowed might;
 Thou, not eclipsing a remoter light;
 And, through the shadow of the seasons three,
 From Spring to Autumn's sere maturity, 365
 Light it into the Winter of the tomb,
 Where it may ripen to a brighter bloom.
 Thou too, O Comet beautiful and fierce,
 Who drew the heart of this frail Universe
 Towards thine own; till, wrecked in that convulsion, 370
 Alternating attraction and repulsion,
 Thine went astray and that was rent in twain;
 Oh, float into our azure heaven again!
 Be there Love's folding-star at thy return;
 The living Sun will feed thee from its urn 375
 Of golden fire; the Moon will veil her horn
 In thy last smiles; adoring Even and Morn
 Will worship thee with incense of calm breath
 And lights and shadows; as the star of Death

And Birth is worshipped by those sisters wild 380
 Called Hope and Fear—upon the heart are piled
 Their offerings,—of this sacrifice divine
 A World shall be the altar.

Lady mine,
 Scorn not these flowers of thought, the fading birth 385
 Which from its heart of hearts that plant puts forth
 Whose fruit, made perfect by thy sunny eyes,
 Will be as of the trees of Paradise.

The day is come, and thou wilt fly with me.
 To whatsoever of dull mortality
 Is mine, remain a vestal sister still; 390
 To the intense, the deep, the imperishable,
 Not mine but me, henceforth be thou united
 Even as a bride, delighting and delighted.
 The hour is come:—the destined Star has risen
 Which shall descend upon a vacant prison. 395
 The walls are high, the gates are strong, thick set
 The sentinels—but true Love never yet
 Was thus constrained: it overleaps all fence:
 Like lightning, with invisible violence
 Piercing its continents; like Heaven's free breath, 400
 Which he who grasps can hold not; liker Death,
 Who rides upon a thought, and makes his way
 Through temple, tower, and palace, and the array
 Of arms: more strength has Love than he or they;
 For it can burst his charnel, and make free 405
 The limbs in chains, the heart in agony,
 The soul in dust and chaos.

Emily,
 A ship is floating in the harbour now,
 A wind is hovering o'er the mountain's brow;
 There is a path on the sea's azure floor, 410
 No keel has ever ploughed that path before;
 The halcyons brood around the foamless isles;
 The treacherous Ocean has forsworn its wiles;
 The merry mariners are bold and free:
 Say, my heart's sister, wilt thou sail with me? 415
 Our bark is as an albatross, whose nest
 Is a far Eden of the purple East;
 And we between her wings will sit, while Night,
 And Day, and Storm, and Calm, pursue their flight,
 Our ministers, along the boundless Sea, 420
 Treading each other's heels, unheededly.
 It is an isle under Ionian skies,
 Beautiful as a wreck of Paradise,
 And, for the harbours are not safe and good,
 This land would have remained a solitude 425

But for some pastoral people native there,
 Who from the Elysian, clear, and golden air
 Draw the last spirit of the age of gold,
 Simple and spirited; innocent and bold.
 The blue Aegean girds this chosen home, 430
 With ever-changing sound and light and foam,
 Kissing the sifted sands, and caverns hoar;
 And all the winds wandering along the shore
 Undulate with the undulating tide:
 There are thick woods where sylvan forms abide; 435
 And many a fountain, rivulet, and pond,
 As clear as elemental diamond,
 Or serene morning air; and far beyond,
 The mossy tracks made by the goats and deer
 (Which the rough shepherd treads but once a year) 440
 Pierce into glades, caverns, and bowers, and halls
 Built round with ivy, which the waterfalls
 Illumining, with sound that never fails
 Accompany the noonday nightingales;
 And all the place is peopled with sweet airs; 445
 The light clear element which the isle wears
 Is heavy with the scent of lemon-flowers,
 Which floats like mist laden with unseen showers,
 And falls upon the eyelids like faint sleep;
 And from the moss violets and jonquils peep, 450
 And dart their arrowy odour through the brain
 Till you might faint with that delicious pain.
 And every motion, odour, beam, and tone,
 With that deep music is in unison:
 Which is a soul within the soul—they seem 455
 Like echoes of an antenatal dream.—
 It is an isle 'twixt Heaven, Air, Earth, and Sea,
 Cradled, and hung in clear tranquillity;
 Bright as that wandering Eden Lucifer,
 Washed by the soft blue Oceans of young air. 460
 It is a favoured place. Famine or Blight,
 Pestilence, War and Earthquake, never light
 Upon its mountain-peaks; blind vultures, they
 Sail onward far upon their fatal way:
 The wingèd storms, chanting their thunder-psalm 465
 To other lands, leave azure chasms of calm
 Over this isle, or weep themselves in dew,
 From which its fields and woods ever renew
 Their green and golden immortality.
 And from the sea there rise, and from the sky 470
 There fall, clear exhalations, soft and bright,
 Veil after veil, each hiding some delight,
 Which Sun or Moon or zephyr draw aside,
 Till the isle's beauty, like a naked bride
 Glowing at once with love and loveliness, 475

Blushes and trembles at its own excess:
 Yet, like a buried lamp, a Soul no less
 Burns in the heart of this delicious isle,
 An atom of th' Eternal, whose own smile
 Unfolds itself, and may be felt, not seen 480
 O'er the gray rocks, blue waves, and forests green,
 Filling their bare and void interstices.—
 But the chief marvel of the wilderness
 Is a lone dwelling, built by whom or how
 None of the rustic island-people know: 485
 'Tis not a tower of strength, though with its height
 It overtops the woods; but, for delight,
 Some wise and tender Ocean-King, ere crime
 Had been invented, in the world's young prime,
 Reared it, a wonder of that simple time, 490
 An envy of the isles, a pleasure-house
 Made sacred to his sister and his spouse.
 It scarce seems now a wreck of human art,
 But, as it were Titanic; in the heart
 Of Earth having assumed its form, then grown 495
 Out of the mountains, from the living stone,
 Lifting itself in caverns light and high:
 For all the antique and learned imagery
 Has been erased, and in the place of it
 The ivy and the wild-vine interknit 500
 The volumes of their many-twining stems;
 Parasite flowers illume with dewy gems
 The lampless halls, and when they fade, the sky
 Peeps through their winter-woof of tracery
 With moonlight patches, or star atoms keen, 505
 Or fragments of the day's intense serene;—
 Working mosaic on their Parian floors.
 And, day and night, aloof, from the high towers
 And terraces, the Earth and Ocean seem
 To sleep in one another's arms, and dream 510
 Of waves, flowers, clouds, woods, rocks, and all that we
 Read in their smiles, and call reality.

This isle and house are mine, and I have vowed
 Thee to be lady of the solitude.—
 And I have fitted up some chambers there 515
 Looking towards the golden Eastern air,
 And level with the living winds, which flow
 Like waves above the living waves below.—
 I have sent books and music there, and all
 Those instruments with which high Spirits call 520
 The future from its cradle, and the past
 Out of its grave, and make the present last
 In thoughts and joys which sleep, but cannot die,

501 many-twining] many twining *ed. prin.* 1821.
Rossetti cj.

504 winter-woof] inter-woof

Folded within their own eternity.
 Our simple life wants little, and true taste 525
 Hires not the pale drudge Luxury, to waste
 The scene it would adorn, and therefore still,
 Nature with all her children haunts the hill.
 The ring-dove, in the embowering ivy, yet
 Keeps up her love-lament, and the owls flit 530
 Round the evening tower, and the young stars glance
 Between the quick bats in their twilight dance;
 The spotted deer bask in the fresh moonlight
 Before our gate, and the slow, silent night
 Is measured by the pants of their calm sleep. 535
 Be this our home in life, and when years heap
 Their withered hours, like leaves, on our decay,
 Let us become the overhanging day,
 The living soul of this Elysian isle,
 Conscious, inseparable, one. Meanwhile 540
 We two will rise, and sit, and walk together,
 Under the roof of blue Ionian weather,
 And wander in the meadows, or ascend
 The mossy mountains, where the blue heavens bend
 With lightest winds, to touch their paramour; 545
 Or linger, where the pebble-paven shore,
 Under the quick, faint kisses of the sea
 Trembles and sparkles as with ecstasy,—
 Possessing and possessed by all that is
 Within that calm circumference of bliss, 550
 And by each other, till to love and live
 Be one:—or, at the noontide hour, arrive
 Where some old cavern hoar seems yet to keep
 The moonlight of the expired night asleep,
 Through which the awakened day can never peep; 555
 A veil for our seclusion, close as night's,
 Where secure sleep may kill thine innocent lights;
 Sleep, the fresh dew of languid love, the rain
 Whose drops quench kisses till they burn again.
 And we will talk, until thought's melody 560
 Become too sweet for utterance, and it die
 In words, to live again in looks, which dart
 With thrilling tone into the voiceless heart,
 Harmonizing silence without a sound.
 Our breath shall intermix, our bosoms bound, 565
 And our veins beat together; and our lips
 With other eloquence than words, eclipse
 The soul that burns between them, and the wells
 Which boil under our being's inmost cells,
 The fountains of our deepest life, shall be 570
 Confused in Passion's golden purity,
 As mountain-springs under the morning sun.
 We shall become the same, we shall be one

Spirit within two frames, oh! wherefore two?
 One passion in twin-hearts, which grows and grew, 575
 Till like two meteors of expanding flame,
 Those spheres instinct with it become the same,
 Touch, mingle, are transfigured; ever still
 Burning, yet ever inconsumable:
 In one another's substance finding food, 580
 Like flames too pure and light and unimbued
 To nourish their bright lives with baser prey,
 Which point to Heaven and cannot pass away:
 One hope within two wills, one will beneath
 Two overshadowing minds, one life, one death, 585
 One Heaven, one Hell, one immortality,
 And one annihilation. Woe is me!
 The wingèd words on which my soul would pierce
 Into the height of Love's rare Universe,
 Are chains of lead around its flight of fire— 590
 I pant, I sink, I tremble, I expire!

Weak Verses, go, kneel at your Sovereign's feet,
 And say:—'We are the masters of thy slave;
 What wouldest thou with us and ours and thine?'
 Then call your sisters from Oblivion's cave, 595
 All singing loud: 'Love's very pain is sweet,
 But its reward is in the world divine
 Which, if not here, it builds beyond the grave.'
 So shall ye live when I am there. Then haste
 Over the hearts of men, until ye meet 600
 Marina, Vanna, Primus, and the rest,
 And bid them love each other and be blessed:
 And leave the troop which errs, and which reproves,
 And come and be my guest,—for I am Love's.

FRAGMENTS CONNECTED WITH EPIPSYCHIDION

[Of the fragments of verse that follow, lines 1-37, 62-92 were printed by Mrs. Shelley in *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd edition; lines 1-174 were printed or reprinted by Dr. Garnett in *Relics of Shelley*, 1862; and lines 175-186 were printed by Mr. C. D. Locock from the first draft of *Epipsychidion* amongst the Shelley MSS. in the Bodleian Library. See *Examination*, &c., 1903, pp. 12, 13. The three early drafts of the *Preface* (*Advertisement*) were printed by Mr. Locock in the same volume, pp. 4, 5.]

THREE EARLY DRAFTS OF THE PREFACE (ADVERTISEMENT) PREFACE I

THE following Poem was found amongst other papers in the Portfolio of a young Englishman with whom the Editor had contracted an intimacy at Florence, brief indeed, but sufficiently long to render the Catastrophe by which it terminated one of the most painful events of his life.—

The literary merit of the Poem in question may not be considerable; but worse verses are printed every day, &

He was an accomplished & amiable person but his error was, *θνητος ὢν μη θνητα φρονεῖν*,—his fate is an additional proof that ‘The tree of Knowledge is not that of Life.’—He had framed to himself certain opinions, founded no doubt upon the truth of things, but built up to a Babel height; they fell by their own weight, & the thoughts that were his architects, became unintelligible one to the other, as men upon whom confusion of tongues has fallen.

[These] verses seem to have been written as a sort of dedication of some work to have been presented to the person whom they address: but his papers afford no trace of such a work—The circumstances to which [they] the poem allude, may easily be understood by those to whom [the] spirit of the poem itself is [un]intelligible: a detail of facts, sufficiently romantic in [themselves but] their combinations

The melancholy [task] charge of consigning the body of my poor friend to the grave, was committed to me by his desolated family. I caused him to be buried in a spot selected by himself, & on the h

PREFACE II

[Epips] T. E. V. Epipsych
Lines addressed to
the Noble Lady
[Emilia] [E. V.]
Emilia

[The following Poem was found in the PF. of a young Englishman, who died on his passage from Leghorn to the Levant. He had bought one of the Sporades] He was accompanied by a lady [who might have been] supposed to be his wife, & an effeminate looking youth, to whom he shewed an [attachment] so [singular] excessive an attachment as to give rise to the suspicion, that she was a woman—At his death this suspicion was confirmed; object speedily found a refuge both from the taunts of the brute multitude, and from the of her grief in the same grave that contained her lover.—He had bought one of the Sporades, & fitted up a Saracenic castle which accident had preserved in some repair with simple elegance, & it was his intention to dedicate the remainder of his life to undisturbed intercourse with his companions

These verses apparently were intended as a dedication of a longer poem or series of poems

PREFACE III

THE writer of these lines died at Florence in [January 1820] while he was preparing * * for one wildest of the of the Sporades, where he bought & fitted up the ruins of some old building—His life was singular, less on account of the romantic vicissitudes which diversified it, than the ideal tinge which they received from his own character & feelings—

The verses were apparently intended by the writer to accompany some longer poem or collection of poems, of which there* [are no remnants in his] * * * remains [in his] portfolio.—

The editor is induced to

The present poem, like the *vita Nova* of Dante, is sufficiently intelligible to a certain class of readers without a matter of fact history of the circumstances to which it relate, & to a certain other class, it must & ought ever to

remain incomprehensible—It was evidently intended to be prefixed to a longer poem or series of poems—but among his papers there are no traces of such a collection.

PASSAGES OF THE POEM, OR CONNECTED THEREWITH

Here, my dear friend, is a new book for you;
 I have already dedicated two
 To other friends, one female and one male,—
 What you are, is a thing that I must veil;
 What can this be to those who praise or rail? 5
 I never was attached to that great sect
 Whose doctrine is that each one should select
 Out of the world a mistress or a friend,
 And all the rest, though fair and wise, commend
 To cold oblivion—though 'tis in the code 10
 Of modern morals, and the beaten road
 Which those poor slaves with weary footsteps tread
 Who travel to their home among the dead
 By the broad highway of the world—and so
 With one sad friend, and many a jealous foe, 15
 The dreariest and the longest journey go.

Free love has this, different from gold and clay,
 That to divide is not to take away.
 Like ocean, which the general wind breaks
 Into ten thousand waves, and each one makes 20
 A mirror of the moon—like some great glass,
 Which did distort whatever form might pass,
 Dashed into fragments by a playful child,
 Which then reflects its eyes and forehead mild;
 Giving for one, which it could ne'er express, 25
 A thousand images of loveliness.

If I were one whom the loud world held wise,
 I should disdain to quote authorities
 In commendation of this kind of love:—
 Why there is first the God in heaven above, 30
 Who wrote a book called Nature, 'tis to be
 Reviewed, I hear, in the next Quarterly;
 And Socrates, the Jesus Christ of Greece,
 And Jesus Christ Himself, did never cease
 To urge all living things to love each other, 35
 And to forgive their mutual faults, and smother
 The Devil of disunion in their souls.

.

I love you!—Listen, O embodied Ray
 Of the great Brightness; I must pass away
 While you remain, and these light words must be 40
 Tokens by which you may remember me.

Start not—the thing you are is unbetrayed,
 If you are human, and if but the shade
 Of some sublimer spirit

And as to friend or mistress, 'tis a form ;
 Perhaps I wish you were one. Some declare
 You a familiar spirit, as you are ;
 Others with a more inhuman
 Hint that, though not my wife, you are a woman ;
 What is the colour of your eyes and hair ?
 Why, if you were a lady, it were fair
 The world should know—but, as I am afraid,
 The Quarterly would bait you if betrayed ;
 And if, as it will be sport to see them stumble
 Over all sorts of scandals, hear them mumble
 Their litany of curses—some guess right,
 And others swear you're a Hermaphrodite ;
 Like that sweet marble monster of both sexes,
 Which looks so sweet and gentle that it vexes
 The very soul that the soul is gone
 Which lifted from her limbs the veil of stone.

It is a sweet thing, friendship, a dear balm,
 A happy and auspicious bird of calm,
 Which rides o'er life's ever tumultuous Ocean ;
 A God that broods o'er chaos in commotion ;
 A flower which fresh as Lapland roses are,
 Lifts its bold head into the world's frore air,
 And blooms most radiantly when others die,
 Health, hope, and youth, and brief prosperity ;
 And with the light and odour of its bloom,
 Shining within the dungeon and the tomb ;
 Whose coming is as light and music are
 'Mid dissonance and gloom—a star
 Which moves not 'mid the moving heavens alone—
 A smile among dark frowns—a gentle tone
 Among rude voices, a beloved light,
 A solitude, a refuge, a delight.
 If I had but a friend ! Why, I have three
 Even by my own confession ; there may be
 Some more, for what I know, for 'tis my mind
 To call my friends all who are wise and kind,—
 And these, Heaven knows, at best are very few ;
 But none can ever be more dear than you.
 Why should they be ? My muse has lost her wings,
 Or like a dying swan who soars and sings,
 I should describe you in heroic style,
 But as it is, are you not void of guile ?

A lovely soul, formed to be blessed and bless:
 A well of sealed and secret happiness;
 A lute which those whom Love has taught to play 90
 Make music on to cheer the roughest day,
 And enchant sadness till it sleeps?

To the oblivion whither I and thou,
 All loving and all lovely, hasten now
 With steps, ah, too unequal! may we meet 95
 In one Elysium or one winding-sheet!

If any should be curious to discover
 Whether to you I am a friend or lover,
 Let them read Shakespeare's sonnets, taking thence
 A whetstone for their dull intelligence 100
 That tears and will not cut, or let them guess
 How Diotima, the wise prophetess,
 Instructed the instructor, and why he
 Rebuked the infant spirit of melody
 On Agathon's sweet lips, which as he spoke 105
 Was as the lovely star when morn has broke
 The roof of darkness, in the golden dawn,
 Half-hidden, and yet beautiful.

I'll pawn
 My hopes of Heaven—you know what they are worth—
 That the presumptuous pedagogues of Earth, 110
 If they could tell the riddle offered here
 Would scorn to be, or being to appear
 What now they seem and are—but let them chide,
 They have few pleasures in the world beside;
 Perhaps we should be dull were we not chidden, 115
 Paradise fruits are sweetest when forbidden.
 Folly can season Wisdom, Hatred Love.

Farewell, if it can be to say farewell
 To those who

I will not, as most dedicators do, 120
 Assure myself and all the world and you,
 That you are faultless—would to God they were
 Who taunt me with your love! I then should wear
 These heavy chains of life with a light spirit,
 And would to God I were, or even as near it 125
 As you, dear heart. Alas! what are we? Clouds
 Driven by the wind in warring multitudes,
 Which rain into the bosom of the earth,
 And rise again, and in our death and birth,
 And through our restless life, take as from heaven 130
 Hues which are not our own, but which are given,

And then withdrawn, and with inconstant glance
Flash from the spirit to the countenance.

There is a Power, a Love, a Joy, a God

Which makes in mortal hearts its brief abode,

A Pythian exhalation, which inspires

Love, only love—a wind which o'er the wires

Of the soul's giant harp

There is a mood which language faints beneath;

You feel it striding, as Almighty Death

His bloodless steed

And what is that most brief and bright delight

Which rushes through the touch and through the sight,

And stands before the spirit's inmost throne,

A naked Seraph? None hath ever known.

Its birth is darkness, and its growth desire;

Untameable and fleet and fierce as fire,

Not to be touched but to be felt alone,

It fills the world with glory—and is gone.

It floats with rainbow pinions o'er the stream

Of life, which flows, like a dream

Into the light of morning, to the grave

As to an ocean

What is that joy which serene infancy

Perceives not, as the hours content them by,

Each in a chain of blossoms, yet enjoys

The shapes of this new world, in giant toys

Wrought by the busy ever new?

Remembrance borrows Fancy's glass, to show

These forms more sincere

Than now they are, than then, perhaps, they were.

When everything familiar seemed to be

Wonderful, and the immortality

Of this great world, which all things must inherit,

Was felt as one with the awakening spirit,

Unconscious of itself, and of the strange

Distinctions which in its proceeding change

It feels and knows, and mourns as if each were

A desolation

Were it not a sweet refuge, Emily,

For all those exiles from the dull insane

Who vex this pleasant world with pride and pain,

For all that band of sister-spirits known

To one another by a voiceless tone?

If day should part us night will mend division

And if sleep parts us—we will meet in vision

And if life parts us—we will mix in death
 Yielding our mite [?] of reluctant breath
 Death cannot part us—we must meet again
 In all in nothing in delight in pain:
 How, why or when or where—it matters not
 So that we share an undivided lot. . . .

180

And we will move possessing and possessed
 Wherever beauty on the earth's bare [?] breast
 Lies like the shadow of thy soul—till we
 Become one being with the world we see. . . .

185

ADONAIS

AN ELEGY ON THE DEATH OF JOHN KEATS, AUTHOR OF
 ENDYMION, HYPERION, Etc.

Ἄσπῆρ πρὶν μὲν ἔλαμπες ἐνὶ ζωοῖσιν Ἐψὼς
 νῦν δὲ θανὼν λάμπεις Ἑσπερος ἐν φθιμένοις.—PLATO

[*Adonais* was composed at Pisa during the early days of June, 1821, and printed, with the author's name, at Pisa, 'with the types of Didot,' by July 13, 1821. Part of the impression was sent to the brothers Ollier for sale in London. An exact reprint of this Pisa edition (a few typographical errors only being corrected) was issued in 1829 by Gee & Bridges, Cambridge, at the instance of Arthur Hallam and Richard Monckton Milnes (Lord Houghton). The poem was included in Galignani's edition of *Coleridge, Shelley and Keats*, Paris, 1829, and by Mrs. Shelley in the *Poetical Works* of 1839. Mrs. Shelley's text presents three important variations from that of the *ed. princeps*. In 1876 an edition of the *Adonais*, with Introduction and Notes, was printed for private circulation by Mr. H. Buxton Forman, C.B. Ten years later a reprint 'in exact facsimile' of the Pisa edition was edited with a Bibliographical Introduction by Mr. T. J. Wise (*Shelley Society Publications*, 2nd Series, No. 1, Reeves & Turner, London, 1886). Our text is that of the *ed. princeps*, Pisa, 1821, modified by Mrs. Shelley's text of 1839. The readings of the *ed. princeps*, wherever superseded, are recorded in the footnotes. The Editor's Notes at the end of the volume should be consulted.]

PREFACE

Φάρμακον ἦλθε, Βίον, ποτὶ σὸν στόμα, φάρμακον εἶδες.
 πῶς τευ τοῖς χεῖλεσσι ποτέδραμε, κοῦκ ἐγλυκάνθη;
 τίς δὲ βροτὸς τοσσούτον ἀνάμερος, ἢ κεράσαι τοι,
 ἡ δοῦναι λαλέοντι τὸ φάρμακον; ἐκφυγεν ὥδάν.

—MOSCHUS, EPITAPH. BION.

It is my intention to subjoin to the London edition of this poem a criticism upon the claims of its lamented object to be classed among the writers of the highest genius who have adorned our age. My known repugnance to the narrow principles of taste on which several of his earlier compositions were modelled prove at least that I am an impartial judge. I consider the fragment of *Hyperion* as second to nothing that was ever produced by a writer of the same years.

John Keats died at Rome of a consumption, in his twenty-fourth year, on

the —— of —— 1821; and was buried in the romantic and lonely cemetery of the Protestants in that city, under the pyramid which is the tomb of Cestius, and the massy walls and towers, now mouldering and desolate, which formed the circuit of ancient Rome. The cemetery is an open space among the ruins, covered in winter with violets and daisies. It might make one in love with death, to think that one should be buried in so sweet a place.

The genius of the lamented person to whose memory I have dedicated these unworthy verses was not less delicate and fragile than it was beautiful; and where cankerworms abound, what wonder if its young flower was blighted in the bud? The savage criticism on his *Endymion*, which appeared in the *Quarterly Review*, produced the most violent effect on his susceptible mind; the agitation thus originated ended in the rupture of a blood-vessel in the lungs; a rapid consumption ensued, and the succeeding acknowledgements from more candid critics of the true greatness of his powers were ineffectual to heal the wound thus wantonly inflicted.

It may be well said that these wretched men know not what they do. They scatter their insults and their slanders without heed as to whether the poisoned shaft lights on a heart made callous by many blows or one like Keats's composed of more penetrable stuff. One of their associates is, to my knowledge, a most base and unprincipled calumniator. As to *Endymion*, was it a poem, whatever might be its defects, to be treated contemptuously by those who had celebrated, with various degrees of complacency and panegyric, *Paris*, and *Woman*, and a *Syrian Tale*, and Mrs. Lefanu, and Mr. Barrett, and Mr. Howard Payne, and a long list of the illustrious obscure? Are these the men who in their venal good nature presumed to draw a parallel between the Rev. Mr. Milman and Lord Byron? What gnat did they strain at here, after having swallowed all those camels? Against what woman taken in adultery dares the foremost of these literary prostitutes to cast his opprobrious stone? Miserable man! you, one of the meanest, have wantonly defaced one of the noblest specimens of the workmanship of God. Nor shall it be your excuse, that, murderer as you are, you have spoken daggers, but used none.

The circumstances of the closing scene of poor Keats's life were not made known to me until the *Elegy* was ready for the press. I am given to understand that the wound which his sensitive spirit had received from the criticism of *Endymion* was exasperated by the bitter sense of unrequited benefits; the poor fellow seems to have been hooted from the stage of life, no less by those on whom he had wasted the promise of his genius, than those on whom he had lavished his fortune and his care. He was accompanied to Rome, and attended in his last illness by Mr. Severn, a young artist of the highest promise, who, I have been informed, 'almost risked his own life, and sacrificed every prospect to unwearied attendance upon his dying friend.' Had I known these circumstances before the completion of my poem, I should have been tempted to add my feeble tribute of applause to the more solid recompense which the virtuous man finds in the recollection of his own motives. Mr. Severn can dispense with a reward from 'such stuff as dreams are made of.' His conduct is a golden augury of the success of his future career—may the unextinguished Spirit of his illustrious friend animate the creations of his pencil, and plead against Oblivion for his name!

ADONAIS

I

I WEEP for Adonais—he is dead!
 O, weep for Adonais! though our tears
 Thaw not the frost which binds so dear a head!
 And thou, sad Hour, selected from all years
 To mourn our loss, rouse thy obscure compeers, 5
 And teach them thine own sorrow, say: 'With me
 Died Adonais; till the Future dares
 Forget the Past, his fate and fame shall be
 An echo and a light unto eternity!'

II

Where wert thou, mighty Mother, when he lay, 10
 When thy Son lay, pierced by the shaft which flies
 In darkness? where was lorn Urania
 When Adonais died? With veiled eyes,
 'Mid listening Echoes, in her Paradise
 She sate, while one, with soft enamoured breath, 15
 Rekindled all the fading melodies,
 With which, like flowers that mock the corse beneath,
 He had adorned and hid the coming bulk of Death.

III

Oh, weep for Adonais—he is dead!
 Wake, melancholy Mother, wake and weep! 20
 Yet wherefore? Quench within their burning bed
 Thy fiery tears, and let thy loud heart keep
 Like his, a mute and uncomplaining sleep;
 For he is gone, where all things wise and fair
 Descend;—oh, dream not that the amorous Deep 25
 Will yet restore him to the vital air;
 Death feeds on his mute voice, and laughs at our despair.

IV

Most musical of mourners, weep again!
 Lament anew, Urania!—He died,
 Who was the Sire of an immortal strain, 30
 Blind, old, and lonely, when his country's pride,
 The priest, the slave, and the liberticide,
 Trampled and mocked with many a loathed rite
 Of lust and blood; he went, unterrified,
 Into the gulf of death; but his clear Sprite 35
 Yet reigns o'er earth; the third among the sons of light.

V

Most musical of mourners, weep anew!
 Not all to that bright station dared to climb;
 And happier they their happiness who knew,
 Whose tapers yet burn through that night of time 40
 In which suns perished; others more sublime,

Struck by the envious wrath of man or god,
 Have sunk, extinct in their refulgent prime;
 And some yet live, treading the thorny road,
 Which leads, through toil and hate, to Fame's serene abode. 45

VI

But now, thy youngest, dearest one, has perished—
 The nursling of thy widowhood, who grew,
 Like a pale flower by some sad maiden cherished,
 And fed with true-love tears, instead of dew;
 Most musical of mourners, weep anew! 50
 Thy extreme hope, the loveliest and the last,
 The bloom, whose petals nipped before they blew
 Died on the promise of the fruit, is waste;
 The broken lily lies—the storm is overpast.

VII

To that high Capital, where kingly Death
 Keeps his pale court in beauty and decay, 55
 He came; and bought, with price of purest breath,
 A grave among the eternal.—Come away!
 Haste, while the vault of blue Italian day
 Is yet his fitting charnel-roof! while still 60
 He lies, as if in dewy sleep he lay;
 Awake him not! surely he takes his fill
 Of deep and liquid rest, forgetful of all ill.

VIII

He will awake no more, oh, never more!—
 Within the twilight chamber spreads apace 65
 The shadow of white Death, and at the door
 Invisible Corruption waits to trace
 His extreme way to her, dim dwelling-place;
 The eternal Hunger sits, but pity and awe
 Soothe her pale rage, nor dares she to deface 70
 So fair a prey, till darkness, and the law
 Of change, shall o'er his sleep the mortal curtain draw.

IX

Oh, weep for Adonais!—The quick Dreams,
 The passion-wingèd Ministers of thought,
 Who were his flocks, whom near the living streams 75
 Of his young spirit he fed, and whom he taught
 The love which was its music, wander not,—
 Wander no more, from kindling brain to brain,
 But droop there, whence they sprung; and mourn their lot
 Round the cold heart, where, after their sweet pain, 80
 They ne'er will gather strength, or find a home again.

49 true-love] true love *edd.* 1821, 1839. 72 Of change, &c. *so edd.* 1829 (*Galigani*),
 1839; Of mortal change, shall fill the grave which is her maw *ed.* 1821. 81 or *ed.* 1821;
 nor *ed.* 1839.

X

And one with trembling hands clasps his cold head,
 And fans him with her moonlight wings, and cries;
 'Our love, our hope, our sorrow, is not dead;
 See, on the silken fringe of his faint eyes, 85
 Like dew upon a sleeping flower, there lies
 A tear some Dream has loosened from his brain.'
 Lost Angel of a ruined Paradise!
 She knew not 'twas her own; as with no stain
 She faded, like a cloud which had outwept its rain. 90

XI

One from a lucid urn of starry dew
 Washed his light limbs as if embalming them;
 Another clipped her profuse locks, and threw
 The wreath upon him, like an anadem, 95
 Which frozen tears instead of pearls begem;
 Another in her wilful grief would break
 Her bow and wingèd reeds, as if to stem
 A greater loss with one which was more weak;
 And dull the barbèd fire against his frozen cheek.

XII

Another Splendour on his mouth alit, 100
 That mouth, whence it was wont to draw the breath
 Which gave it strength to pierce the guarded wit,
 And pass into the panting heart beneath
 With ~~lightning~~ and with music: the damp death
 Quenched its caress upon his icy lips; 105
 And, as a dying meteor stains a wreath
 Of moonlight vapour, which the cold night clips,
 It flushed through his pale limbs, and passed to its eclipse.

XIII

And others came . . . Desires and Adorations,
 Wingèd Persuasions and veiled Destinies, 110
 Splendours, and Glooms, and glimmering Incarnations
 Of hopes and fears, and twilight Phantasies;
 And Sorrow, with her family of Sighs,
 And Pleasure, blind with tears, led by the gleam
 Of her own dying smile instead of eyes, 115
 Came in slow pomp;—the moving pomp might seem
 Like pageantry of mist on an autumnal stream.

XIV

All he had loved, and moulded into thought,
 From shape, and hue, and odour, and sweet sound,
 Lamented Adonais. Morning sought 120
 Her eastern watch-tower, and her hair unbound,
 Wet with the tears which should adorn the ground,

Dimmed the æreal eyes that kindle day;
 Afar the melancholy thunder moaned,
 Pale Ocean in unquiet slumber lay, 125
 And the wild Winds flew round, sobbing in their dismay.

XV

Lost Echo sits amid the voiceless mountains,
 And feeds her grief with his remembered lay,
 And will no more reply to winds or fountains,
 Or amorous birds perched on the young green spray, 130
 Or herdsman's horn, or bell at closing day;
 Since she can mimic not his lips, more dear
 Than those for whose disdain she pined away
 Into a shadow of all sounds:—a drear
 Murmur, between their songs, is all the woodmen hear. 135

XVI

Grief made the young Spring wild, and she threw down
 Her kindling buds, as if she Autumn were,
 Or they dead leaves; since her delight is flown,
 For whom should she have waked the sullen year?
 To Phoebus was not Hyacinth so dear 140
 Nor to himself Narcissus, as to both
 Thou, Adonais: wan they stand and sere
 Amid the faint companions of their youth,
 With dew all turned to tears; odour, to sighing ruth.

XVII

Thy spirit's sister, the lorn nightingale 145
 Mourns not her mate with such melodious pain;
 Not so the eagle, who like thee could scale
 Heaven, and could nourish in the sun's domain
 Her mighty youth with morning, doth complain,
 Soaring and screaming round her empty nest, 150
 As Albion wails for thee: the curse of Cain
 Light on his head who pierced thy innocent breast,
 And scared the angel soul that was its earthly guest!

XVIII

Ah, woe is me! Winter is come and gone,
 But grief returns with the revolving year; 155
 The airs and streams renew their joyous tone;
 The ants, the bees, the swallows reappear;
 Fresh leaves and flowers deck the dead Seasons' bier;
 The amorous birds now pair in every brake,
 And build their mossy homes in field and brake; 160
 And the green lizard, and the golden snake,
 Like unimprisoned flames, out of their trance awake.

XIX

Through wood and stream and field and hill and Ocean
 A quickening life from the Earth's heart has burst
 As it has ever done, with change and motion, 165
 From the great morning of the world when first
 God dawned on Chaos; in its stream immersed,
 The lamps of Heaven flash with a softer light;
 All baser things pant with life's sacred thirst;
 Diffuse themselves; and spend in love's delight, 170
 The beauty and the joy of their renewèd might.

XX

The leprous corpse, touched by this spirit tender,
 Exhales itself in flowers of gentle breath;
 Like incarnations of the stars, when splendour
 Is changed to fragrance, they illumine death 175
 And mock the merry worm that wakes beneath;
 Nought we know, dies. Shall that alone which knows
 Be as a sword consumed before the sheath
 By sightless lightning?—the intense atom glows
 A moment, then is quenched in a most cold repose. 180

XXI

Alas! that all we loved of him should be,
 But for our grief, as if it had not been,
 And grief itself be mortal! Woe is me!
 Whence are we, and why are we? of what scene
 The actors or spectators? Great and mean 185
 Meet massed in death, who lends what life must borrow.
 As long as skies are blue, and fields are green,
 Evening must usher night, night urge the morrow,
 Month follow month with woe, and year wake year to sorrow.

XXII

He will awake no more, oh, never more! 190
 'Wake thou,' cried Misery, 'childless Mother, rise
 Out of thy sleep, and slake, in thy heart's core,
 A wound more fierce than his, with tears and sighs.'
 And all the Dreams that watched Urania's eyes,
 And all the Echoes whom their sister's song 195
 Had held in holy silence, cried: 'Arise!'
 Swift as a Thought by the snake Memory stung,
 From her ambrosial rest the fading Splendour sprung.

XXIII

She rose like an autumnal Night, that springs
 Out of the East, and follows wild and drear 200
 The golden Day, which, on eternal wings,
 Even as a ghost abandoning a bier,
 Had left the Earth a corpse. Sorrow and fear

So struck, so roused, so rapt Urania;
 So saddened round her like an atmosphere
 Of stormy mist; so swept her on her way
 Even to the mournful place where Adonais lay. 205

XXIV

Out of her secret Paradise she sped,
 Through camps and cities rough with stone, and steel,
 And human hearts, which to her aery tread
 Yielding not, wounded the invisible 210
 Palms of her tender feet where'er they fell:
 And barbèd tongues, and thoughts more sharp than they,
 Rent the soft Form they never could repel,
 Whose sacred blood, like the young tears of May,
 Paved with eternal flowers that undeserving way. 215

XXV

In the death-chamber for a moment Death,
 Shamed by the presence of that living Might,
 Blushed to annihilation, and the breath
 Revisited those lips, and Life's pale light 220
 Flashed through those limbs, so late her dear delight.
 'Leave me not wild and drear and comfortless,
 As silent lightning leaves the starless night!
 Leave me not!' cried Urania: her distress
 Roused Death: Death rose and smiled, and met her vain caress.

XXVI

'Stay yet awhile! speak to me once again;
 Kiss me, so long but as a kiss may live;
 And in my heartless breast and burning brain
 That word, that kiss, shall all thoughts else survive, 226
 With food of saddest memory kept alive,
 Now thou art dead, as if it were a part
 Of thee, my Adonais! I would give
 All that I am to be as thou now art!
 But I am chained to Time, and cannot thence depart! 230

XXVII

'O gentle child, beautiful as thou wert,
 Why didst thou leave the trodden paths of men
 Too soon, and with weak hands though mighty heart
 Dare the unpastured dragon in his den?
 Defenceless as thou wert, oh, where was then
 Wisdom the mirrored shield, or scorn the spear? 235
 Or hadst thou waited the full cycle, when
 Thy spirit should have filled its crescent sphere,
 The monsters of life's waste had fled from thee like deer. 240

XXVIII

'The herded wolves, bold only to pursue;
 The obscene ravens, clamorous o'er the dead; 245
 The vultures to the conqueror's banner true
 Who feed where Desolation first has fed,
 And whose wings rain contagion;—how they fled,
 When, like Apollo, from his golden bow
 The Pythian of the age one arrow sped 250
 And smiled!—The spoilers tempt no second blow,
 They fawn on the proud feet that spurn them lying low.

XXIX

'The sun comes forth, and many reptiles spawn;
 He sets, and each ephemeral insect then 255
 Is gathered into death without a dawn,
 And the immortal stars awake again;
 So is it in the world of living men:
 A godlike mind soars forth, in its delight
 Making earth bare and veiling heaven, and when
 It sinks, the swarms that dimmed or shared its light 260
 Leave to its kindred lamps the spirit's awful night.'

XXX

Thus ceased she: and the mountain shepherds came,
 Their garlands sere, their magic mantles rent;
 The Pilgrim of Eternity, whose fame
 Over his living head like Heaven is bent, 265
 An early but enduring monument,
 Came, veiling all the lightnings of his song
 In sorrow; from her wilds Ierne sent
 The sweetest lyrist of her saddest wrong,
 And Love taught Grief to fall like music from his tongue. 270

XXXI

Midst others of less note, came one frail Form,
 A phantom among men; companionless
 As the last cloud of an expiring storm
 Whose thunder is its knell; he, as I guess,
 Had gazed on Nature's naked loveliness, 275
 Actæon-like, and now he fled astray
 With feeble steps o'er the world's wilderness,
 And his own thoughts, along that rugged way,
 Pursued, like raging hounds, their father and their prey.

XXXII

A pardlike Spirit beautiful and swift— 280
 A Love in desolation masked;—a Power
 Girt round with weakness;—it can scarce uplift
 The weight of the superincumbent hour;
 It is a dying lamp, a falling shower,

252 lying low *ed.* 1839; as they go *ed.* 1821.

A breaking billow ;—even whilst we speak
 Is it not broken? On the withering flower
 The killing sun smiles brightly: on a cheek
 The life can burn in blood, even while the heart may break.

XXXIII

His head was bound with pansies overblown,
 And faded violets, white, and pied, and blue ;
 And a light spear topped with a cypress cone,
 Round whose rude shaft dark ivy-tresses grew
 Yet dripping with the forest's noonday dew,
 Vibrated, as the ever-beating heart
 Shook the weak hand that grasped it ; of that crew
 He came the last, neglected and apart ;
 A herd-abandoned deer struck by the hunter's dart.

XXXIV

All stood aloof, and at his partial moan
 Smiled through their tears ; well knew that gentle band
 Who in another's fate now wept his own,
 As in the accents of an unknown land
 He sung new sorrow ; sad Urania scanned
 The Stranger's mien, and murmured: 'Who art thou?'
 He answered not, but with a sudden hand
 Made bare his branded and ensanguined brow,
 Which was like Cain's or Christ's—oh! that it should be so!

XXXV

What softer voice is hushed over the dead?
 Athwart what brow is that dark mantle thrown?
 What form leans sadly o'er the white death-bed,
 In mockery of monumental stone,
 The heavy heart heaving without a moan?
 If it be He, who, gentlest of the wise,
 Taught, soothed, loved, honoured the departed one,
 Let me not vex, with inharmonious sighs,
 The silence of that heart's accepted sacrifice.

XXXVI

Our Adonais has drunk poison—oh!
 What deaf and viperous murderer could crown
 Life's early cup with such a draught of woe?
 The nameless worm would now itself disown:
 It felt, yet could escape, the magic tone
 Whose prelude held all envy, hate, and wrong,
 But what was howling in one breast alone,
 Silent with expectation of the song,
 Whose master's hand is cold, whose silver lyre unstrung.

XXXVII

Live thou, whose infamy is not thy fame! 325
 Live! fear no heavier chastisement from me,
 Thou noteless blot on a remembered name!
 But be thyself; and know thyself to be!
 And ever at thy season be thou free
 To spill the venom when thy fangs o'erflow; 330
 Remorse and Self-contempt shall cling to thee;
 Hot Shame shall burn upon thy secret brow,
 And like a beaten hound tremble thou shalt—as now.

XXXVIII

Nor let us weep that our delight is fled
 Far from these carrion kites that scream below; 335
 He wakes or sleeps with the enduring dead;
 Thou canst not soar where he is sitting now.—
 Dust to the dust! but the pure spirit shall flow
 Back to the burning fountain whence it came,
 A portion of the Eternal, which must glow 340
 Through time and change, unquenchably the same,
 Whilst thy cold embers choke the sordid hearth of shame.

XXXIX

Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep—
 He hath awakened from the dream of life—
 'Tis we, who lost in stormy visions, keep 345
 With phantoms an unprofitable strife,
 And in mad trance, strike with our spirit's knife
 Invulnerable nothings.—*We* decay
 Like corpses in a charnel; fear and grief
 Convulse us and consume us day by day, 350
 And cold hopes swarm like worms within our living clay.

XL

He has outsoared the shadow of our night;
 Envy and calumny and hate and pain,
 And that unrest which men miscall delight,
 Can touch him not and torture not again; 355
 From the contagion of the world's slow stain
 He is secure, and now can never mourn
 A heart grown cold, a head grown gray in vain;
 Nor, when the spirit's self has ceased to burn,
 With sparkless ashes load an unlamented urn. 360

XLI

He lives, he wakes—'tis Death is dead, not he;
 Mourn not for Adonais.—Thou young Dawn,
 Turn all thy dew to splendour, for from thee
 The spirit thou lamentest is not gone;

Ye caverns and ye forests, cease to moan!
 Cease, ye faint flowers and fountains, and thou Air,
 Which like a mourning veil thy scarf hadst thrown
 O'er the abandoned Earth, now leave it bare
 Even to the joyous stars which smile on its despair!

365

XLII

He is made one with Nature: there is heard
 His voice in all her music, from the moan
 Of thunder, to the song of night's sweet bird;
 He is a presence to be felt and known
 In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,
 Spreading itself where'er that Power may move
 Which has withdrawn his being to its own;
 Which wields the world with never-wearied love,
 Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

370

375

XLIII

He is a portion of the loveliness
 Which once he made more lovely: he doth bear
 His part, while the one Spirit's plastic stress
 Sweeps through the dull dense world, compelling there,
 All new successions to the forms they wear;
 Torturing th' unwilling dross that checks its flight
 To its own likeness, as each mass may bear;
 And bursting in its beauty and its might
 From trees and beasts and men into the Heaven's light.

380

385

XLIV

The splendours of the firmament of time
 May be eclipsed, but are extinguished not;
 Like stars to their appointed height they climb,
 And death is a low mist which cannot blot
 The brightness it may veil. When lofty thought
 Lifts a young heart above its mortal lair,
 And love and life contend in it, for what
 Shall be its earthly doom, the dead live there
 And move like winds of light on dark and stormy air.

390

395

XLV

The inheritors of unfulfilled renown
 Rose from their thrones, built beyond mortal thought,
 Far in the Unapparent. Chatterton
 Rose pale,—his solemn agony had not
 Yet faded from him; Sidney, as he fought
 And as he fell and as he lived and loved
 Sublimely mild, a Spirit without spot,
 Arose; and Lucan, by his death approved:
 Oblivion as they rose shrank like a thing reproved.

400

405

XLVI

And many more, whose names on Earth are dark,
 But whose transmitted effluence cannot die
 So long as fire outlives the parent spark,
 Rose, robed in dazzling immortality.
 'Thou art become as one of us,' they cry, 410
 'It was for thee yon kingless sphere has long
 Swung blind in unascended majesty,
 Silent alone amid an Heaven of Song.
 Assume thy wingèd throne, thou Vesper of our throng!'

XLVII

Who mourns for Adonais? Oh, come forth, 415
 Fond wretch! and know thyself and him aright.
 Clasp with thy panting soul the pendulous Earth;
 As from a centre, dart thy spirit's light
 Beyond all worlds, until its spacious might
 Sate the void circumference: then shrink 420
 Even to a point within our day and night;
 And keep thy heart light lest it make thee sink
 When hope has kindled hope, and lured thee to the brink.

XLVIII

Or go to Rome, which is the sepulchre,
 Oh, not of him, but of our joy: 'tis nought 425
 That ages, empires, and religions there
 Lie buried in the ravage they have wrought;
 For such as he can lend,—they borrow not
 Glory from those who made the world their prey;
 And he is gathered to the kings of thought 430
 Who waged contention with their time's decay,
 And of the past are all that cannot pass away.

XLIX

Go thou to Rome,—at once the Paradise,
 The grave, the city, and the wilderness;
 And where its wrecks like shattered mountains rise, 435
 And flowering weeds, and fragrant copses dress
 The bones of Desolation's nakedness
 Pass, till the spirit of the spot shall lead
 Thy footsteps to a slope of green access
 Where, like an infant's smile, over the dead 440
 A light of laughing flowers along the grass is spread;

L

And gray walls moulder round, on which dull Time
 Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand;
 And one keen pyramid with wedge sublime,
 Pavilioning the dust of him who planned 445
 This refuge for his memory, doth stand

Like flame transformed to marble; and beneath,
 A field is spread, on which a newer band
 Have pitched in Heaven's smile their camp of death,
 Welcoming him we lose with scarce extinguished breath. 450

LI

Here pause: these graves are all too young as yet
 To have outgrown the sorrow which consigned
 Its charge to each; and if the seal is set,
 Here, on one fountain of a mourning mind,
 Break it not thou! too surely shalt thou find 455
 Thine own well full, if thou returnest home,
 Of tears and gall. From the world's bitter wind
 Seek shelter in the shadow of the tomb.
 What Adonais is, why fear we to become?

LII

The One remains, the many change and pass;
 Heaven's light forever shines, Earth's shadows fly;
 Life, like a dome of many-coloured glass,
 Stains the white radiance of Eternity,
 Until Death tramples it to fragments.—Die,
 If thou wouldst be with that which thou dost seek! 465
 Follow where all is fled!—Rome's azure sky,
 Flowers, ruins, statues, music, words, are weak
 The glory they transfuse with fitting truth to speak.

LIII

Why linger, why turn back, why shrink, my Heart?
 Thy hopes are gone before: from all things here 470
 They have departed; thou shouldst now depart!
 A light is passed from the revolving year,
 And man, and woman; and what still is dear
 Attracts to crush, repels to make thee wither.
 The soft sky smiles,—the low wind whispers near: 475
 'Tis Adonais calls! oh, hasten thither,
 No more let Life divide what Death can join together.

LIV

That Light whose smile kindles the Universe,
 That Beauty in which all things work and move,
 That Benediction which the eclipsing Curse 480
 Of birth can quench not, that sustaining Love
 Which through the web of being blindly wove
 By man and beast and earth and air and sea,
 Burns bright or dim, as each are mirrors of
 The fire for which all thirst; now beams on me, 485
 Consuming the last clouds of cold mortality.

LV

The breath whose might I have invoked in song
 Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven,
 Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng
 Whose sails were never to the tempest given; 490
 The massy earth and spherèd skies are riven!
 I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar;
 Whilst, burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,
 The soul of Adonais, like a star,
 Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are. 495

CANCELLED PASSAGES OF ADONAI8

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

PASSAGES OF THE PREFACE

... the expression of my indignation and sympathy. I will allow myself a first and last word on the subject of calumny as it relates to me. As an author I have dared and invited censure. If I understand myself, I have written neither for profit nor for fame. I have employed my poetical compositions and publications simply as the instruments of that sympathy between myself and others which the ardent and unbounded love I cherished for my kind incited me to acquire. I expected all sorts of stupidity and insolent contempt from those ...

... These compositions (excepting the tragedy of *The Cenci*, which was written rather to try my powers than to unburthen my full heart) are insufficiently ... commendation than perhaps they deserve, even from their bitterest enemies; but they have not attained any corresponding popularity. As a man, I shrink from notice and regard; the ebb and flow of the world vexes me; I desire to be left in peace. Persecution, contumely, and calumny have been heaped upon me in profuse measure; and domestic conspiracy and legal oppression have violated in my person the most sacred rights of nature and humanity. The bigot will say it was the recompense of my errors; the man of the world will call it the result of my imprudence; but never upon one head ...

... Reviewers, with some rare exceptions, are a most stupid and malignant race. As a bankrupt thief turns thieftaker in despair, so an unsuccessful author turns critic. But a young spirit panting for fame, doubtful of its powers, and certain only of its aspirations, is ill qualified to assign its true value to the sneer of this world. He knows not that such stuff as this is of the abortive and monstrous births which time consumes as fast as it produces. He sees the truth and falsehood, the merits and demerits, of his case inextricably entangled ... No personal offence should have drawn from me this public comment upon such stuff ...

... The offence of this poor victim seems to have consisted solely in his intimacy with Leigh Hunt, Mr. Hazlitt, and some other enemies of despotism and superstition. My friend Hunt has a very hard skull to crack, and will take a deal of killing. I do not know much of Mr. Hazlitt, but ...

... I knew personally but little of Keats; but on the news of his situation I wrote to him, suggesting the propriety of trying the Italian climate, and inviting him to join me. Unfortunately he did not allow me ...

PASSAGES OF THE POEM

And ever as he went he swept a lyre
 Of unaccustomed shape, and strings
 Now like the of impetuous fire,
 Which shakes the forest with its murmurings,
 Now like the rush of the aerial wings
 Of the enamoured wind among the trees,
 Whispering unimaginable things,
 And dying on the streams of dew serene,
 Which feed the unmown meads with ever-during green.

And the green Paradise which western waves
 Embosom in their ever-wailing sweep,
 Talking of freedom to their tongueless caves,
 Or to the spirits which within them keep
 A record of the wrongs which, though they sleep,
 Die not, but dream of retribution, heard
 His hymns, and echoing them from steep to steep,
 Kept—

And then came one of sweet and earnest looks,
 Whose soft smiles to his dark and night-like eyes
 Were as the clear and ever-living brooks
 Are to the obscure fountains whence they rise,
 Showing how pure they are: a Paradise
 Of happy truth upon his forehead low
 Lay, making wisdom lovely, in the guise
 Of earth-awakening morn upon the brow
 Of star-deserted heaven, while ocean gleams below.

His song, though very sweet, was low and faint,
 A simple strain—

A mighty Phantasm, half concealed
 In darkness of his own exceeding light,
 Which clothed his awful presence unrevealed,
 Charioted on the night
 Of thunder-smoke, whose skirts were chrysolite.

And like a sudden meteor, which outstrips
 The splendour-wingèd chariot of the sun,
 eclipse
 The armies of the golden stars, each one
 Pavilioned in its tent of light—all strewn
 Over the chasms of blue night—

HELLAS

A LYRICAL DRAMA

ΜΑΝΤΙΣ 'ΕΙΜ' 'ΕΣΘΛΩΝ ΑΓΩΝΩΝ.—OEDIP. COLON.

[*Hellas* was composed at Pisa in the autumn of 1821, and dispatched to London, November 11. It was published, with the author's name, by C. & J. Ollier in the spring of 1822. A transcript of the poem by Edward Williams is in the Rowfant Library. Ollier availed himself of Shelley's permission to cancel certain passages in the notes; he also struck out certain lines of the text. These omissions were, some of them, restored in Galignani's one-volume edition of *Coleridge, Shelley and Keats*, Paris, 1829, and also by Mrs. Shelley in the *Poetical Works*, 1839. A passage in the *Preface*, suppressed by Ollier, was restored by Mr. Buxton Forman (1892) from a proof copy of *Hellas* in his possession. The *Prologue to Hellas* was edited by Dr. Garnett in 1862 (*Relics of Shelley*) from the MSS. at Boscombe Manor.

Our text is that of the *editio princeps*, 1822, corrected by a list of *Errata* sent by Shelley to Ollier, April 11, 1822. The Editor's Notes at the end of the volume should be consulted.]

TO HIS EXCELLENCY

PRINCE ALEXANDER MAVROCORDATO

LATE SECRETARY FOR FOREIGN AFFAIRS TO THE HOSPODAR OF WALLACHIA

THE DRAMA OF HELLAS IS INSCRIBED AS AN

IMPERFECT TOKEN OF THE ADMIRATION,

SYMPATHY, AND FRIENDSHIP OF

THE AUTHOR.

PISA, November 1, 1821.

PREFACE

THE poem of *Hellas*, written at the suggestion of the events of the moment, is a mere improvise, and derives its interest (should it be found to possess any) solely from the intense sympathy which the Author feels with the cause he would celebrate.

The subject, in its present state, is insusceptible of being treated otherwise than lyrically, and if I have called this poem a drama from the circumstance of its being composed in dialogue, the licence is not greater than that which has been assumed by other poets who have called their productions epics, only because they have been divided into twelve or twenty-four books.

The *Persae* of Aeschylus afforded me the first model of my conception, although the decision of the glorious contest now waging in Greece being yet suspended forbids a catastrophe parallel to the return of Xerxes and the desolation of the Persians. I have, therefore, contented myself with exhibiting a series of lyric pictures, and with having wrought upon the curtain of futurity, which falls upon the unfinished scene, such figures of indistinct and visionary delineation as suggest the final triumph of the Greek cause as a portion of the cause of civilisation and social improvement.

The drama (if drama it must be called) is, however, so inartificial that I doubt whether, if recited on the Thespian waggon to an Athenian village at the Dionysiaca, it would have obtained the prize of the goat. I shall bear

with equanimity any punishment, greater than the loss of such a reward, which the Aristarchi of the hour may think fit to inflict.

The only *goat-song* which I have yet attempted has, I confess, in spite of the unfavourable nature of the subject, received a greater and a more valuable portion of applause than I expected or than it deserved.

Common fame is the only authority which I can allege for the details which form the basis of the poem, and I must trespass upon the forgiveness of my readers for the display of newspaper erudition to which I have been reduced. Undoubtedly, until the conclusion of the war, it will be impossible to obtain an account of it sufficiently authentic for historical materials; but poets have their privilege, and it is unquestionable that actions of the most exalted courage have been performed by the Greeks—that they have gained more than one naval victory, and that their defeat in Wallachia was signalized by circumstances of heroism more glorious even than victory.

The apathy of the rulers of the civilised world to the astonishing circumstance of the descendants of that nation to which they owe their civilisation, rising as it were from the ashes of their ruin, is something perfectly inexplicable to a mere spectator of the shows of this mortal scene. We are all Greeks. Our laws, our literature, our religion, our arts have their root in Greece. But for Greece—Rome, the instructor, the conqueror, or the metropolis of our ancestors, would have spread no illumination with her arms, and we might still have been savages and idolaters; or, what is worse, might have arrived at such a stagnant and miserable state of social institution as China and Japan possess.

The human form and the human mind attained to a perfection in Greece which has impressed its image on those faultless productions, whose very fragments are the despair of modern art, and has propagated impulses which cannot cease, through a thousand channels of manifest or imperceptible operation, to ennoble and delight mankind until the extinction of the race.

The modern Greek is the descendant of those glorious beings whom the imagination almost refuses to figure to itself as belonging to our kind, and he inherits much of their sensibility, their rapidity of conception, their enthusiasm, and their courage. If in many instances he is degraded by moral and political slavery to the practice of the basest vices it engenders—and that below the level of ordinary degradation—let us reflect that the corruption of the best produces the worst, and that habits which subsist only in relation to a peculiar state of social institution may be expected to cease as soon as that relation is dissolved. In fact, the Greeks, since the admirable novel of *Anastasis* could have been a faithful picture of their manners, have undergone most important changes; the flower of their youth, returning to their country from the universities of Italy, Germany, and France, have communicated to their fellow-citizens the latest results of that social perfection of which their ancestors were the original source. The University of Chios contained before the breaking out of the revolution eight hundred students, and among them several Germans and Americans. The munificence and energy of many of the Greek princes and merchants, directed to the renovation of their country with a spirit and a wisdom which has few examples, is above all praise.

The English permit their own oppressors to act according to their natural sympathy with the Turkish tyrant, and to brand upon their name the indelible blot of an alliance with the enemies of domestic happiness, of Christianity and civilisation.

Russia desires to possess, not to liberate Greece; and is contented to see the Turks, its natural enemies, and the Greeks, its intended slaves, enfeeble each other until one or both fall into its net. The wise and generous policy of England would have consisted in establishing the independence of Greece, and in maintaining it both against Russia and the Turk;—but when was the oppressor generous or just?

[Should the English people ever become free, they will reflect upon the part which those who presume to represent their will have played in the great drama of the revival of liberty, with feelings which it would become them to anticipate. This is the age of the war of the oppressed against the oppressors, and every one of those ringleaders of the privileged gangs of murderers and swindlers, called Sovereigns, look to each other for aid against the common enemy, and suspend their mutual jealousies in the presence of a mightier fear. Of this holy alliance all the despots of the earth are virtual members. But a new race has arisen throughout Europe, nursed in the abhorrence of the opinions which are its chains, and she will continue to produce fresh generations to accomplish that destiny which tyrants foresee and dread¹.]

The Spanish Peninsula is already free. France is tranquil in the enjoyment of a partial exemption from the abuses which its unnatural and feeble government are vainly attempting to revive. The seed of blood and misery has been sown in Italy, and a more vigorous race is arising to go forth to the harvest. The world waits only the news of a revolution of Germany to see the tyrants who have pinnacled themselves on its supineness precipitated into the ruin from which they shall never arise. Well do these destroyers of mankind know their enemy, when they impute the insurrection in Greece to the same spirit before which they tremble throughout the rest of Europe, and that enemy well knows the power and the cunning of its opponents, and watches the moment of their approaching weakness and inevitable division to wrest the bloody sceptres from their grasp.

PROLOGUE TO HELLAS

Herald of Eternity. It is the day when all the sons of God
Wait in the roofless senate-house, whose floor
Is Chaos, and the immovable abyss
Frozen by His steadfast word to hyaline

The shadow of God, and delegate
Of that before whose breath the universe
Is as a print of dew. 5

Hierarchs and kings
Who from your thrones pinnacled on the past
Sway the reluctant present, ye who sit
Pavilioned on the radiance or the gloom 10
Of mortal thought, which like an exhalation
Steaming from earth, conceals the of heaven
Which gave it birth, assemble here

8 your *Garnett*; yon *Forman*, *Dowden*.

¹ This paragraph, suppressed in 1822 by Charles Ollier, was first restored in 1892 by Mr. Buxton Forman [*Poetical Works of P. B. S.*, vol. iv. pp. 40-1] from a proof copy of *Hellas* in his possession.

Before your Father's throne ; the swift decree
 Yet hovers, and the fiery incarnation 15
 Is yet withheld, clothèd in which it shall
 annul
 The fairest of those wandering isles that gem
 The sapphire space of interstellar air,
 That green and azure sphere, that earth enwrapped 20
 Less in the beauty of its tender light
 Than in an atmosphere of living spirit
 Which interpenetrating all the . . .
 it rolls from realm to realm
 And age to age, and in its ebb and flow 25
 Impels the generations
 To their appointed place,
 Whilst the high Arbiter
 Beholds the strife, and at the appointed time
 Sends His decrees veiled in eternal . . . 30
 Within the circuit of this pendent orb
 There lies an antique region, on which fell
 The dews of thought in the world's golden dawn
 Earliest and most benign, and from it sprung
 Temples and cities and immortal forms 35
 And harmonies of wisdom and of song,
 And thoughts, and deeds worthy of thoughts so fair.
 And when the sun of its dominion failed,
 And when the winter of its glory came,
 The winds that stripped it bare blew on and swept 40
 That dew into the utmost wildernesses
 In wandering clouds of sunny rain that thawed
 The unmaternal bosom of the North.
 Haste, sons of God, for ye beheld,
 Reluctant, or consenting, or astonished, 45
 The stern decrees go forth, which heaped on Greece
 Ruin and degradation and despair.
 A fourth now waits: assemble, sons of God,
 To speed or to prevent or to suspend,
 If, as ye dream, such power be not withheld, 50
 The unaccomplished destiny.

.

Chorus.

The curtain of the Universe
 Is rent and shattered,
 The splendour-wingèd worlds disperse
 Like wild doves scattered. 55
 Space is roofless and bare,
 And in the midst a cloudy shrine,
 Dark amid thrones of light.
 In the blue glow of hyaline

Golden worlds revolve and shine. 60
 In flight
 From every point of the Infinite,
 Like a thousand dawns on a single night
 The splendours rise and spread;
 And through thunder and darkness dread 65
 Light and music are radiated,
 And in their pavilioned chariots led
 By living wings high overhead
 The giant Powers move,
 Gloomy or bright as the thrones they fill. 70

A chaos of light and motion
 Upon that glassy ocean.

The senate of the Gods is met,
 Each in his rank and station set;
 There is silence in the spaces— 75
 Lo! Satan, Christ, and Mahomet
 Start from their places!

Christ. Almighty Father!
 Low-kneeling at the feet of Destiny

There are two fountains in which spirits weep 80
 When mortals err, Discord and Slavery named,
 And with their bitter dew two Destinies
 Filled each their irrevocable urns; the third,
 Fiercest and mightiest, mingled both, and added
 Chaos and Death, and slow Oblivion's lymph, 85
 And hate and terror, and the poisoned rain

The Aurora of the nations. By this brow
 Whose pores wept tears of blood, by these wide wounds,
 By this imperial crown of agony,
 By infamy and solitude and death, 90
 For this I underwent, and by the pain
 Of pity for those who would for me
 The unremembered joy of a revenge,
 For this I felt—by Plato's sacred light,
 Of which my spirit was a burning morrow— 95
 By Greece and all she cannot cease to be,
 Her quenchless words, sparks of immortal truth,
 Stars of all night—her harmonies and forms,
 Echoes and shadows of what Love adores
 In thee, I do compel thee, send forth Fate, 100
 Thy irrevocable child: let her descend,
 A seraph-wingèd Victory [arrayed]
 In tempest of the omnipotence of God
 Which sweeps through all things.

From hollow leagues, from Tyranny which arms
Adverse miscreeds and emulous anarchies
To stamp, as on a wingèd serpent's seed,
Upon the name of Freedom; from the storm
Of faction, which like earthquake shakes and sickens
The solid heart of enterprise; from all
By which the holiest dreams of highest spirits
Are stars beneath the dawn . . .

She shall arise
Victorious as the world arose from Chaos!
And as the Heavens and the Earth arrayed
Their presence in the beauty and the light
Of Thy first smile, O Father,—as they gather
The spirit of Thy love which paves for them
Their path o'er the abyss, till every sphere
Shall be one living Spirit,—so shall Greece—

Satan. Be as all things beneath the empyrean,
Mine! Art thou eyeless like old Destiny,
Thou mockery-king, crowned with a wreath of thorns?
Whose sceptre is a reed, the broken reed
Which pierces thee! whose throne a chair of scorn;
For seest thou not beneath this crystal floor
The innumerable worlds of golden light
Which are my empire, and the least of them
which thou wouldst redeem from me?

Know'st thou not them my portion?
Or wouldst rekindle the strife
Which our great Father then did arbitrate
Which he assigned to his competing sons
Each his apportioned realm?

Thou Destiny,
Thou who art mailed in the omnipotence
Of Him who sends thee forth, whate'er thy task,
Speed, spare not to accomplish, and be mine
Thy trophies, whether Greece again become
The fountain in the desert whence the earth
Shall drink of freedom, which shall give it strength
To suffer, or a gulf of hollow death
To swallow all delight, all life, all hope.
Go, thou Vicegerent of my will, no less
Than of the Father's; but lest thou shouldst faint,
The wingèd hounds, Famine and Pestilence,
Shall wait on thee, the hundred-forkèd snake
Insatiate Superstition still shall . . .

The earth behind thy steps, and War shall hover
Above, and Fraud shall gape below, and Change
Shall flit before thee on her dragon wings,
Convulsing and consuming, and I add
Three vials of the tears which daemons weep
When virtuous spirits through the gate of Death

Pass triumphing over the thorns of life,
 Sceptres and crowns, mitres and swords and snares,
 Trampling in scorn, like Him and Socrates. 155
 The first is Anarchy; when Power and Pleasure,
 Glory and science and security,
 On Freedom hang like fruit on the green tree,
 Then pour it forth, and men shall gather ashes.
 The second Tyranny—

Christ. Obdurate spirit! 160
 Thou seest but the Past in the To-come.
 Pride is thy error and thy punishment.
 Boast not thine empire, dream not that thy worlds
 Are more than furnace-sparks or rainbow-drops
 Before the Power that wields and kindles them. 165
 True greatness asks not space, true excellence
 Lives in the Spirit of all things that live,
 Which lends it to the worlds thou callest thine.

Mahomet. . . . Haste thou and fill the waning crescent
 With beams as keen as those which pierced the shadow 170
 Of Christian night rolled back upon the West,
 When the orient moon of Islam rode in triumph
 From Tmolus to the Acroceraunian snow.

Wake, thou Word
 Of God, and from the throne of Destiny 175
 Even to the utmost limit of thy way
 May Triumph

Be thou a curse on them whose creed
 Divides and multiplies the most high God.

HELLAS

DRAMATIS PERSONAE

MAHMUD.

HASSAN.

DAOOD.

AHASUERUS, a Jew.

CHORUS of Greek Captive Women. [The Phantom¹ of Mahomet II.]
 Messengers, Slaves, and Attendants. SCENE, Constantinople. TIME, Sunset.

SCENE.—A Terrace on the Seraglio. MAHMUD sleeping, an
 Indian Slave sitting beside his Couch.

Chorus of Greek Captive Women.

WE strew these opiate flowers

On thy restless pillow,—

They were stripped from Orient bowers,

By the Indian billow.

Be thy sleep

Calm and deep,

Like theirs who fell—not ours who weep!

¹ Omitted, ed. 1822.

Indian.

Away, unlovely dreams!
 Away, false shapes of sleep!
 Be his, as Heaven seems,
 Clear, and bright, and deep!
 Soft as love, and calm as death,
 Sweet as a summer night without a breath.

10

Chorus.

Sleep, sleep! our song is laden
 With the soul of slumber;
 It was sung by a Samian maiden,
 Whose lover was of the number
 Who now keep
 That calm sleep
 Whence none may wake, where none shall weep.

15

20

Indian.

I touch thy temples pale!
 I breathe my soul on thee!
 And could my prayers avail,
 All my joy should be
 Dead, and I would live to weep,
 So thou mightst win one hour of quiet sleep.

25

Chorus.

Breathe low, low
 The spell of the mighty mistress now!
 When Conscience lulls her sated snake,
 And Tyrants sleep, let Freedom wake.
 Breathe low—low
 The words which, like secret fire, shall flow
 Through the veins of the frozen earth—low, low!

30

Semichorus I.

Life may change, but it may fly not;
 Hope may vanish, but can die not;
 Truth be veiled, but still it burneth;
 Love repulsed,—but it returneth!

35

Semichorus II.

Yet were life a charnel where
 Hope lay confined with Despair;
 Yet were truth a sacred lie,
 Love were lust—

40

Semichorus I.

If Liberty
 Lent not life its soul of light,
 Hope its iris of delight,
 Truth its prophet's robe to wear,
 Love its power to give and bear.

45

Chorus.

In the great morning of the world,
 The Spirit of God with might unfurled
 The flag of Freedom over Chaos,
 And all its banded anarchs fled,
 Like vultures frightened from Imaus, 50
 Before an earthquake's tread.—
 So from Time's tempestuous dawn
 Freedom's splendour burst and shone:—
 Thermopylae and Marathon
 Caught, like mountains beacon-lighted, 55
 The springing Fire.—The wingèd glory
 On Philippi half-alighted,
 Like an eagle on a promontory.
 Its unwearied wings could fan
 The quenchless ashes of Milan. 60
 From age to age, from man to man,
 It lived; and lit from land to land
 Florence, Albion, Switzerland.

Then night fell; and, as from night,
 Reassuming fiery flight, 65
 From the West swift Freedom came,
 Against the course of Heaven and doom,
 A second sun arrayed in flame,
 To burn, to kindle, to illume.
 From far Atlantis its young beams 70
 Chased the shadows and the dreams.
 France, with all her sanguine steams,
 Hid, but quenched it not; again
 Through clouds its shafts of glory rain
 From utmost Germany to Spain. 75

As an eagle fed with morning
 Scorns the embattled tempest's warning,
 When she seeks her aerie hanging
 In the mountain-cedar's hair,
 And her brood expect the clanging 80
 Of her wings through the wild air,
 Sick with famine:—Freedom, so
 To what of Greece remaineth now
 Returns; her hoary ruins glow
 Like Orient mountains lost in day; 85
 Beneath the safety of her wings
 Her renovated nurslings prey,
 And in the naked lightnings
 Of truth they purge their dazzled eyes.
 Let Freedom leave—where'er she flies, 90
 A Desert, or a Paradise:

Let the beautiful and the brave
Share her glory, or a grave.

Semichorus I.

With the gifts of gladness
Greece did thy cradle strew;

95

Semichorus II.

With the tears of sadness
Greece did thy shroud bedew!

Semichorus I.

With an orphan's affection
She followed thy bier through Time;

Semichorus II.

And at thy resurrection
Reappeareth, like thou, sublime!

100

Semichorus I.

If Heaven should resume thee,
To Heaven shall her spirit ascend;

Semichorus II.

If Hell should entomb thee,
To Hell shall her high hearts bend.

105

Semichorus I.

If Annihilation——

Semichorus II.

Dust let her glories be!
And a name and a nation
Be forgotten, Freedom, with thee!

Indian.

His brow grows darker—breathe not—move not!
He starts—he shudders—ye that love not,
With your panting loud and fast,
Have awakened him at last.

110

Mahmud (starting from his sleep). Man the Seraglio-guard! make fast
the gate!

What! from a cannonade of three short hours?

115

'Tis false! that breach towards the Bosphorus

Cannot be practicable yet—who stirs?

Stand to the match; that when the foe prevails

One spark may mix in reconciling ruin

The conqueror and the conquered! Heave the tower

120

Into the gap—wrench off the roof!

(Enter HASSAN.)

Ha! what!

The truth of day lightens upon my dream

And I am Mahmud still.

Hassan.

Your Sublime Highness

Is strangely moved.

Mahmud. The times do cast strange shadows
 On those who watch and who must rule their course, 125
 Lest they, being first in peril as in glory,
 Be whelmed in the fierce ebb:—and these are of them.
 Thrice has a gloomy vision hunted me
 As thus from sleep into the troubled day;
 It shakes me as the tempest shakes the sea, 130
 Leaving no figure upon memory's glass.
 Would that——no matter. Thou didst say thou knewest
 A Jew, whose spirit is a chronicle
 Of strange and secret and forgotten things.
 I bade thee summon him:—'tis said his tribe 135
 Dream, and are wise interpreters of dreams.

Hassan. The Jew of whom I spake is old,—so old
 He seems to have outlived a world's decay;
 The hoary mountains and the wrinkled ocean 140
 Seem younger still than he;—his hair and beard
 Are whiter than the tempest-sifted snow;
 His cold pale limbs and pulseless arteries
 Are like the fibres of a cloud instinct
 With light, and to the soul that quickens them 145
 Are as the atoms of the mountain-drift
 To the winter wind:—but from his eye looks forth
 A life of unconsumèd thought which pierces
 The Present, and the Past, and the To-come.
 Some say that this is he whom the great prophet
 Jesus, the son of Joseph, for his mockery, 150
 Mocked with the curse of immortality.
 Some feign that he is Enoch: others dream
 He was pre-adamite and has survived
 Cycles of generation and of ruin.
 The sage, in truth, by dreadful abstinence 155
 And conquering penance of the mutinous flesh,
 Deep contemplation, and unwearied study,
 In years outstretched beyond the date of man,
 May have attained to sovereignty and science
 Over those strong and secret things and thoughts 160
 Which others fear and know not.

Mahmud. I would talk
 With this old Jew.

Hassan. Thy will is even now
 Made known to him, where he dwells in a sea-cavern
 'Mid the Demonesi, less accessible
 Than thou or God! He who would question him 165
 Must sail alone at sunset, where the stream
 Of Ocean sleeps around those foamless isles,
 When the young moon is westering as now,
 And evening airs wander upon the wave;
 And when the pines of that bee-pasturing isle, 170
 Green Erebinthus, quench the fiery shadow

Of his gilt prow within the sapphire water,
 Then must the lonely helmsman cry aloud
 'Ahasuerus!' and the caverns round
 Will answer 'Ahasuerus!' If his prayer
 Be granted, a faint meteor will arise 175
 Lighting him over Marmora, and a wind
 Will rush out of the sighing pine-forest,
 And with the wind a storm of harmony
 Unutterably sweet, and pilot him 180
 Through the soft twilight to the Bosphorus:
 Thence at the hour and place and circumstance
 Fit for the matter of their conference
 The Jew appears. Few dare, and few who dare
 Win the desired communion—but that shout 185
 Bodes—— [A shout within.]

Mahmud. Evil, doubtless; like all human sounds.
 Let me converse with spirits.

Hassan. That shout again.

Mahmud. This Jew whom thou hast summoned—

Hassan. Will be here—

Mahmud. When the omnipotent hour to which are yoked
 He, I, and all things shall compel—enough! 190
 Silence those mutineers—that drunken crew,
 That crowd about the pilot in the storm.
 Ay! strike the foremost shorter by a head!
 They weary me, and I have need of rest.
 Kings are like stars—they rise and set, they have 195
 The worship of the world, but no repose. [Exeunt severally.]

Chorus.

Worlds on worlds are rolling ever
 From creation to decay,
 Like the bubbles on a river
 Sparkling, bursting, borne away. 200
 But they are still immortal
 Who, through birth's orient portal
 And death's dark chasm hurrying to and fro,
 Clothe their unceasing flight
 In the brief dust and light 205
 Gathered around their chariots as they go;
 New shapes they still may weave,
 New gods, new laws receive,
 Bright or dim are they as the robes they last
 On Death's bare ribs had cast. 210
 A power from the unknown God,
 A Promethean conqueror, came;
 Like a triumphal path he trod
 The thorns of death and shame.
 A mortal shape to him 215
 Was like the vapour dim

Which the orient planet animates with light;
 Hell, Sin, and Slavery came,
 Like bloodhounds mild and tame,
 Nor preyed, until their Lord had taken flight; 220
 The moon of Mahomet
 Arose, and it shall set:
 While blazoned as on Heaven's immortal noon
 The cross leads generations on.

Swift as the radiant shapes of sleep 225
 From one whose dreams are Paradise
 Fly, when the fond wretch wakes to weep,
 And Day peers forth with her blank eyes;
 So fleet, so faint, so fair,
 The Powers of earth and air 230
 Fled from the folding-star of Bethlehem:
 Apollo, Pan, and Love,
 And even Olympian Jove
 Grew weak, for killing Truth had glared on them;
 Our hills and seas and streams, 235
 Dispeopled of their dreams,
 Their waters turned to blood, their dew to tears.
 Wailed for the golden years.

Enter MAHMUD, HASSAN, DAOOD, and others.

Mahmud. More gold? our ancestors bought gold with victory,
 And shall I sell it for defeat?

Daood. The Janizars 240
 Clamour for pay.

Mahmud. Go! bid them pay themselves
 With Christian blood! Are there no Grecian virgins
 Whose shrieks and spasms and tears they may enjoy?
 No infidel children to impale on spears?
 No hoary priests after that Patriarch 245
 Who bent the curse against his country's heart,
 Which clove his own at last? Go! bid them kill,
 Blood is the seed of gold.

Daood. It has been sown,
 And yet the harvest to the sicklemen
 Is as a grain to each.

Mahmud. Then, take this signet, 250
 Unlock the seventh chamber in which lie
 The treasures of victorious Solyman,—
 An empire's spoil stored for a day of ruin.
 O spirit of my sires! is it not come?
 The prey-birds and the wolves are gorged and sleep;
 But these, who spread their feast on the red earth, 255
 Hunger for gold, which fills not.—See them fed;
 Then, lead them to the rivers of fresh death.

[*Exit* DAOOD.]

O miserable dawn, after a night
 More glorious than the day which it usurped! 260
 O faith in God! O power on earth! O word
 Of the great prophet, whose o'ershadowing wings
 Darkened the thrones and idols of the West,
 Now bright!—For thy sake cursèd be the hour,
 Even as a father by an evil child, 265
 When the orient moon of Islam rolled in triumph
 From Caucasus to White Ceraunia!
 Ruin above, and anarchy below;
 Terror without, and treachery within;
 The Chalice of destruction full, and all
 Thirsting to drink; and who among us dares 270
 To dash it from his lips? and where is Hope?

Hassan. The lamp of our dominion still rides high;
 One God is God—Mahomet is His prophet.
 Four hundred thousand Moslems, from the limits 275
 Of utmost Asia, irresistibly
 Throng, like full clouds at the Sirocco's cry;
 But not like them to weep their strength in tears:
 They bear destroying lightning, and their step
 Wakes earthquake to consume and overwhelm, 280
 And reign in ruin. Phrygian Olympus,
 Tmolus, and Latmos, and Mycale, roughen
 With horrent arms; and lofty ships even now,
 Like vapours anchored to a mountain's edge,
 Freightèd with fire and whirlwind, wait at Scala 285
 The convoy of the ever-veering wind.
 Samos is drunk with blood;—the Greek has paid
 Brief victory with swift loss and long despair.
 The false Moldavian serfs fled fast and far,
 When the fierce shout of 'Allah-illa-Allah!' 290
 Rose like the war-cry of the northern wind
 Which kills the sluggish clouds, and leaves a flock
 Of wild swans struggling with the naked storm.
 So were the lost Greeks on the Danube's day!
 If night is mute, yet the returning sun 295
 Kindles the voices of the morning birds;
 Nor at thy bidding less exultingly
 Than birds rejoicing in the golden day,
 The Anarchies of Africa unleash
 Their tempest-wingèd cities of the sea, 300
 To speak in thunder to the rebel world.
 Like sulphurous clouds, half-shattered by the storm,
 They sweep the pale Aegean, while the Queen
 Of Ocean, bound upon her island-throne,
 Far in the West, sits mourning that her sons 305
 Who frown on Freedom spare a smile for thee:
 Russia still hovers, as an eagle might

Within a cloud, near which a kite and crane
 Hang tangled in inextricable fight,
 To stoop upon the victor;—for she fears 310
 The name of Freedom, even as she hates thine.
 But recreant Austria loves thee as the Grave
 Loves Pestilence, and her slow dogs of war
 Fleshed with the chase, come up from Italy,
 And howl upon their limits; for they see 315
 The panther, Freedom, fled to her old cover,
 Amid seas and mountains, and a mightier brood
 Crouch round. What Anarch wears a crown or mitre,
 Or bears the sword, or grasps the key of gold,
 Whose friends are not thy friends, whose foes thy foes? 320
 Our arsenals and our armouries are full;
 Our forts defy assault; ten thousand cannon
 Lie ranged upon the beach, and hour by hour
 Their earth-convulsing wheels affright the city;
 The galloping of fiery steeds makes pale 325
 The Christian merchant; and the yellow Jew
 Hides his hoard deeper in the faithless earth.
 Like clouds, and like the shadows of the clouds,
 Over the hills of Anatolia,
 Swift in wide troops the Tartar chivalry 330
 Sweep;—the far flashing of their starry lances
 Reverberates the dying light of day.
 We have one God, one King, one Hope, one Law;
 But many-headed Insurrection stands
 Divided in itself, and soon must fall. 335

Mahmud. Proud words, when deeds come short, are seasonable:
 Look, Hassan, on yon crescent moon, emblazoned
 Upon that shattered flag of fiery cloud
 Which leads the rear of the departing day;
 Wan emblem of an empire fading now! 340
 See how it trembles in the blood-red air,
 And like a mighty lamp whose oil is spent
 Shrinks on the horizon's edge, while, from above,
 One star with insolent and victorious light
 Hovers above its fall, and with keen beams, 345
 Like arrows through a fainting antelope,
 Strikes its weak form to death.

Hassan. Even as that moon
 Renews itself——

Mahmud. Shall we be not renewed!
 Far other bark than ours were needed now
 To stem the torrent of descending time: 350
 The Spirit that lifts the slave before his lord
 Stalks through the capitals of armed kings,
 And spreads his ensign in the wilderness:
 Exults in chains; and, when the rebel falls,

Cries like the blood of Abel from the dust ;
 And the inheritors of the earth, like beasts
 When earthquake is unleashed, with idiot fear
 Cower in their kingly dens—as I do now.
 What were Defeat when Victory must appal?
 Or Danger, when Security looks pale?—
 How said the messenger—who, from the fort
 Islanded in the Danube, saw the battle
 Of Bucharest?—that—

Hassan. Ibrahim's scimitar
 Drew with its gleam swift victory from Heaven,
 To burn before him in the night of battle—
 A light and a destruction.

Mahmud. Ay! the day
 Was ours: but how?—

Hassan. The light Wallachians,
 The Arnaut, Servian, and Albanian allies
 Fled from the glance of our artillery
 Almost before the thunderstone alit.
 One half the Grecian army made a bridge
 Of safe and slow retreat, with Moslem dead;
 The other—

Mahmud. Speak—tremble not.—

Hassan. Islanded
 By victor myriads, formed in hollow square
 With rough and steadfast front, and thrice flung back
 The deluge of our foaming cavalry;
 Thrice their keen wedge of battle pierced our lines,
 Our baffled army trembled like one man
 Before a host, and gave them space; but soon,
 From the surrounding hills, the batteries blazed,
 Kneading them down with fire and iron rain:
 Yet none approached; till, like a field of corn
 Under the hook of the swart sickleman,
 The band, intrenched in mounds of Turkish dead,
 Grew weak and few.—Then said the Pacha, 'Slaves,
 Render yourselves—they have abandoned you—
 What hope of refuge, or retreat, or aid?
 We grant your lives.' 'Grant that which is thine own!'
 Cried one, and fell upon his sword and died!
 Another—'God, and man, and hope abandon me;
 But I to them, and to myself, remain
 Constant.'—he bowed his head, and his heart burst.
 A third exclaimed, 'There is a refuge, tyrant,
 Where thou darest not pursue, and canst not harm
 Shouldst thou pursue; there we shall meet again.'
 Then held his breath, and, after a brief spasm,
 The indignant spirit cast its mortal garment
 Among the slain—dead earth upon the earth!

So these survivors, each by different ways,
 Some strange, all sudden, none dishonourable, 400
 Met in triumphant death; and when our army
 Closed in, while yet wonder, and awe, and shame
 Held back the base hyaenas of the battle
 That feed upon the dead and fly the living,
 One rose out of the chaos of the slain: 405
 And if it were a corpse which some dread spirit
 Of the old saviours of the land we rule
 Had lifted in its anger, wandering by;—
 Or if there burned within the dying man
 Unquenchable disdain of death, and faith 410
 Creating what it feigned;—I cannot tell—
 But he cried, 'Phantoms of the free, we come!
 Armies of the Eternal, ye who strike
 To dust the citadels of sanguine kings,
 And shake the souls throned on their stony hearts 415
 And thaw their frostwork diadems like dew;—
 O ye who float around this clime, and weave
 The garment of the glory which it wears,
 Whose fame, though earth betray the dust it clasped,
 Lies sepulchred in monumental thought;— 420
 Progenitors of all that yet is great,
 Ascribe to your bright senate, O accept
 In your high ministrations, us, your sons—
 Us first, and the more glorious yet to come!
 And ye, weak conquerors! giants who look pale 425
 When the crushed worm rebels beneath your tread,
 The vultures and the dogs, your pensioners tame,
 Are overgorged; but, like oppressors, still
 They crave the relic of Destruction's feast.
 The exhalations and the thirsty winds 430
 Are sick with blood; the dew is foul with death;
 Heaven's light is quenched in slaughter: thus, where'er
 Upon your camps, cities, or towers, or fleets,
 The obscene birds the reeking remnants cast
 Of these dead limbs,—upon your streams and mountains, 435
 Upon your fields, your gardens, and your housetops,
 Where'er the winds shall creep, or the clouds fly,
 Or the dews fall, or the angry sun look down
 With poisoned light—Famine, and Pestilence,
 And Panic, shall wage war upon our side! 440
 Nature from all her boundaries is moved
 Against ye: Time has found ye light as foam.
 The Earth rebels; and Good and Evil stake
 Their empire o'er the unborn world of men
 On this one cast;—but ere the die be thrown, 445
 The renovated genius of our race,
 Proud umpire of the impious game, descends,
 A seraph-wingèd Victory, bestriding

The tempest of the Omnipotence of God,
Which sweeps all things to their appointed doom,
And you to oblivion!—More he would have said,
But— 450

Mahmud. Died—as thou shouldst ere thy lips had painted
Their ruin in the hues of our success.
A rebel's crime, guilt with a rebel's tongue!
Your heart is Greek, Hassan.

Hassan. It may be so: 455
A spirit not my own wrenched me within,
And I have spoken words I fear and hate;
Yet would I die for—

Mahmud. Live! oh live! outlive
Me and this sinking empire. But the fleet—

Hassan. Alas!—

Mahmud. The fleet which, like a flock of clouds 460
Chased by the wind, flies the insurgent banner!
Our wingèd castles from their merchant ships!
Our myriads before their weak pirate bands!
Our arms before their chains! our years of empire
Before their centuries of servile fear! 465
Death is awake! Repulse is on the waters!
They own no more the thunder-bearing banner
Of Mahmud; but, like hounds of a base breed,
Gorge from a stranger's hand, and rend their master.

Hassan. Latmos, and Ampelos, and Phanae saw 470
The wreck—

Mahmud. The caves of the Icarian isles
Told each to the other in loud mockery,
And with the tongue as of a thousand echoes,
First of the sea-convulsing fight—and, then,—
Thou darest to speak—senseless are the mountains: 475
Interpret thou their voice!

Hassan. My presence bore
A part in that day's shame. The Grecian fleet
Bore down at daybreak from the North, and hung
As multitudinous on the ocean line,
As cranes upon the cloudless Thracian wind. 480
Our squadron, convoying ten thousand men,
Was stretching towards Nauplia when the battle
Was kindled.—

First through the hail of our artillery
The agile Hydriote barks with press of sail 485
Dashed:—ship to ship, cannon to cannon, man
To man were grappled in the embrace of war,
Inextricable but by death or victory.
The tempest of the raging fight convulsed
To its crystalline depths that stainless sea, 490

466 Repulse is *Shelley, Errata, ed. 1822*; Repulsed *ed. 1822*.
transcript; Hold *ed. 1822*.

472 Told *Errata, Wms.*

And shook Heaven's roof of golden morning clouds,
 Poised on an hundred azure mountain-isles.
 In the brief trances of the artillery
 One cry from the destroyed and the destroyer
 Rose, and a cloud of desolation wrapped 495
 The unforeseen event, till the north wind
 Sprung from the sea, lifting the heavy veil
 Of battle-smoke—then victory—victory!
 For, as we thought, three frigates from Algiers
 Bore down from Naxos to our aid, but soon 500
 The abhorred cross glimmered behind, before,
 Among, around us; and that fatal sign
 Dried with its beams the strength in Moslem hearts,
 As the sun drinks the dew.—What more? We fled!—
 Our noonday path over the sanguine foam 505
 Was beacons,—and the glare struck the sun pale,—
 By our consuming transports: the fierce light
 Made all the shadows of our sails blood-red,
 And every countenance blank. Some ships lay feeding
 The ravening fire, even to the water's level; 510
 Some were blown up; some, settling heavily,
 Sunk; and the shrieks of our companions died
 Upon the wind, that bore us fast and far,
 Even after they were dead. Nine thousand perished!
 We met the vultures legioned in the air 515
 Stemming the torrent of the tainted wind;
 They, screaming from their cloudy mountain-peaks,
 Stooped through the sulphurous battle-smoke and perched
 Each on the weltering carcase that we loved,
 Like its ill angel or its damned soul, 520
 Riding upon the bosom of the sea.
 We saw the dog-fish hastening to their feast.
 Joy waked the voiceless people of the sea,
 And ravening Famine left his ocean cave
 To dwell with War, with us, and with Despair. 525
 We met night three hours to the west of Patmos,
 And with night, tempest—

Mahmud.

Cease!

Enter a Messenger.

Messenger. Your Sublime Highness,
 That Christian hound, the Muscovite Ambassador,
 Has left the city.—If the rebel fleet
 Had anchored in the port, had victory 530
 Crowned the Greek legions in the Hippodrome,
 Panic were tamer.—Obedience and Mutiny,
 Like giants in contention planet-struck,
 Stand gazing on each other.—There is peace
 In Stamboul.—

Mahmud. Is the grave not calmer still?
Its ruins shall be mine. 535

Hassan. Fear not the Russian:
The tiger leagues not with the stag at bay
Against the hunter.—Cunning, base, and cruel,
He crouches, watching till the spoil be won,
And must be paid for his reserve in blood. 540
After the war is fought, yield the sleek Russian
That which thou canst not keep, his deserved portion
Of blood, which shall not flow through streets and fields,
Rivers and seas, like that which we may win,
But stagnate in the veins of Christian slaves! 545

Enter second Messenger.

Second Messenger. Nauplia, Tripolizza, Mothon, Athens,
Navarin, Artas, Monembasia,
Corinth, and Thebes are carried by assault,
And every Islamite who made his dogs
Fat with the flesh of Galilean slaves 550
Passed at the edge of the sword: the lust of blood,
Which made our warriors drunk, is quenched in death;
But like a fiery plague breaks out anew
In deeds which make the Christian cause look pale
In its own light. The garrison of Patras 555
Has store but for ten days, nor is there hope
But from the Briton: at once slave and tyrant,
His wishes still are weaker than his fears,
Or he would sell what faith may yet remain
From the oaths broke in Genoa and in Norway; 560
And if you buy him not, your treasury
Is empty even of promises—his own coin.
The freedman of a western poet-chief
Holds Attica with seven thousand rebels,
And has beat back the Pacha of Negropont: 565
The agèd Ali sits in Yanina
A crownless metaphor of empire:
His name, that shadow of his withered might,
Holds our besieging army like a spell
In prey to famine, pest, and mutiny; 570
He, bastioned in his citadel, looks forth
Joyless upon the sapphire lake that mirrors
The ruins of the city where he reigned
Childless and sceptreless. The Greek has reaped
The costly harvest his own blood matured, 575
Not the sower, Ali—who has bought a truce
From Ypsilanti with ten camel-loads
Of Indian gold.

Enter a third Messenger.

Mahmud. What more?

563 freedman *ed.* 1822; freeman *edd.* 1839.

Third Messenger. The Christian tribes
 Of Lebanon and the Syrian wilderness
 Are in revolt ;—Damascus, Hems, Aleppo 580
 Tremble ;—the Arab menaces Medina,
 The Aethiop has intrenched himself in Sennaar,
 And keeps the Egyptian rebel well employed,
 Who denies homage, claims investiture
 As price of tardy aid. Persia demands 585
 The cities on the Tigris, and the Georgians
 Refuse their living tribute. Crete and Cyprus,
 Like mountain-twins that from each other's veins
 Catch the volcano-fire and earthquake-spasm,
 Shake in the general fever. Through the city, 590
 Like birds before a storm, the Santons shriek,
 And prophesyings horrible and new
 Are heard among the crowd: that sea of men
 Sleeps on the wrecks it made, breathless and still.
 A Dervise, learnèd in the Koran, preaches 595
 That it is written how the sins of Islam
 Must raise up a destroyer even now.
 The Greeks expect a Saviour from the West,
 Who shall not come, men say, in clouds and glory,
 But in the omnipresence of that Spirit 600
 In which all live and are. Ominous signs
 Are blazoned broadly on the noonday sky:
 One saw a red cross stamped upon the sun ;
 It has rained blood ; and monstrous births declare
 The secret wrath of Nature and her Lord. 605
 The army encamped upon the Cydaris
 Was roused last night by the alarm of battle,
 And saw two hosts conflicting in the air,
 The shadows doubtless of the unborn time
 Cast on the mirror of the night. While yet 610
 The fight hung balanced, there arose a storm
 Which swept the phantoms from among the stars.
 At the third watch the Spirit of the Plague
 Was heard abroad flapping among the tents ;
 Those who relieved watch found the sentinels dead. 615
 The last news from the camp is, that a thousand
 Have sickened, and——

Enter a fourth Messenger.

Mahmud. And thou, pale ghost, dim shadow
 Of some untimely rumour, speak!

Fourth Messenger. One comes
 Fainting with toil, covered with foam and blood:
 He stood, he says, on Chelonites'
 Promontory, which o'erlooks the isles that groan 620

620 on Chelonites'] on Chelonites *Errata*; upon Clelonite's *ed.* 1822; upon Clelonit's *edd.* 1839.

Under the Briton's frown, and all their waters
 Then trembling in the splendour of the moon,
 When as the wandering clouds unveiled or hid
 Her boundless light, he saw two adverse fleets 625
 Stalk through the night in the horizon's glimmer,
 Mingling fierce thunders and sulphureous gleams,
 And smoke which strangled every infant wind
 That soothed the silver clouds through the deep air.
 At length the battle slept, but the Sirocco 630
 Awoke, and drove his flock of thunder-clouds
 Over the sea-horizon, blotting out
 All objects—save that in the faint moon-glimpse
 He saw, or dreamed he saw, the Turkish admiral
 And two the loftiest of our ships of war, 635
 With the bright image of that Queen of Heaven,
 Who hid, perhaps, her face for grief, reversed;
 And the abhorred cross—

Enter an Attendant.

Attendant. Your Sublime Highness,
 The Jew, who—
Mahmud. Could not come more seasonably:
 Bid him attend. I'll hear no more! too long 640
 We gaze on danger through the mist of fear,
 And multiply upon our shattered hopes
 The images of ruin. Come what will!
 To-morrow and to-morrow are as lamps
 Set in our path to light us to the edge 645
 Through rough and smooth, nor can we suffer aught
 Which He inflicts not in whose hand we are. [*Exeunt.*

Semichorus I.

Would I were the wingèd cloud
 Of a tempest swift and loud!
 I would scorn 650
 The smile of morn
 And the wave where the moonrise is born!
 I would leave
 The spirits of eve
 A shroud for the corpse of the day to weave 655
 From other threads than mine!
 Bask in the deep blue noon divine.
 Who would? Not I.

Semichorus II.

Whither to fly?

Semichorus I.

Where the rocks that gird th' Aegean 660
 Echo to the battle paean
 Of the free—
 I would flee

A tempestuous herald of victory!
 My golden rain
 For the Grecian slain
 Should mingle in tears with the bloody main,
 And my solemn thunder-knell
 Should ring to the world the passing-bell
 Of Tyranny!

665

670

Semichorus II.

Ah king! wilt thou chain
 The rack and the rain?
 Wilt thou fetter the lightning and hurricane?
 The storms are free,
 But we—

675

Chorus.

O Slavery! thou frost of the world's prime,
 Killing its flowers and leaving its thorns bare!
 Thy touch has stamped these limbs with crime,
 These brows thy branding garland bear,
 But the free heart, the impassive soul
 Scorn thy control!

680

Semichorus I.

Let there be light! said Liberty,
 And like sunrise from the sea,
 Athens arose!—Around her born,
 Shone like mountains in the morn
 Glorious states;—and are they now
 Ashes, wrecks, oblivion?

685

Semichorus II.

Go,
 Where Thermae and Asopus swallowed
 Persia, as the sand does foam;
 Deluge upon deluge followed,
 Discord, Macedon, and Rome:
 And lastly thou!

690

Semichorus I.

Temples and towers,
 Citadels and marts, and they
 Who live and die there, have been ours,
 And may be thine, and must decay;
 But Greece and her foundations are
 Built below the tide of war,
 Based on the crystalline sea
 Of thought and its eternity;
 Her citizens, imperial spirits,
 Rule the present from the past,
 On all this world of men inherits
 Their seal is set.

695

700

Semichorus II.

Hear ye the blast,
 Whose Orphic thunder thrilling calls
 From ruin her Titanian walls?
 Whose spirit shakes the sapless bones
 Of Slavery? Argos, Corinth, Crete
 Hear, and from their mountain thrones
 The daemons and the nymphs repeat
 The harmony.

705

Semichorus I.

I hear! I hear!

710

Semichorus II.

The world's eyeless charioteer,
 Destiny, is hurrying by!
 What faith is crushed, what empire bleeds
 Beneath her earthquake-footed steeds?
 What eagle-wingèd victory sits
 At her right hand? what shadow flits
 Before? what splendour rolls behind?
 Ruin and renovation cry
 'Who but We?'

715

Semichorus I.

I hear! I hear!

The hiss as of a rushing wind,
 The roar as of an ocean foaming,
 The thunder as of earthquake coming.

720

I hear! I hear!

The crash as of an empire falling,
 The shrieks as of a people calling
 'Mercy! mercy!'—How they thrill!
 Then a shout of 'kill! kill! kill!'
 And then a small still voice, thus—

725

Semichorus II.

For

Revenge and Wrong bring forth their kind,
 The foul cubs like their parents are,
 Their den is in the guilty mind,
 And Conscience feeds them with despair.

730

Semichorus I.

In sacred Athens, near the fane
 Of Wisdom, Pity's altar stood:
 Serve not the unknown God in vain,
 But pay that broken shrine again,
 Love for hate and tears for blood.

735

Enter MAHMUD and AHASUERUS.

Mahmud. Thou art a man, thou sayest, even as we.

Ahasuerus. No more!

Mahmud. But raised above thy fellow-men
By thought, as I by power.

Ahasuerus. Thou sayest so.

740

Mahmud. Thou art an adept in the difficult lore
Of Greek and Frank philosophy; thou numberest
The flowers, and thou measurest the stars;
Thou severest element from element;
Thy spirit is present in the Past, and sees
The birth of this old world through all its cycles
Of desolation and of loveliness,

745

And when man was not, and how man became
The monarch and the slave of this low sphere,
And all its narrow circles—it is much—

750

I honour thee, and would be what thou art
Were I not what I am; but the unborn hour,
Cradled in fear and hope, conflicting storms,
Who shall unveil? Nor thou, nor I, nor any
Mighty or wise. I apprehended not

755

What thou hast taught me, but I now perceive
That thou art no interpreter of dreams;
Thou dost not own that art, device, or God,
Can make the Future present—let it come!
Moreover thou disdainest us and ours;
Thou art as God, whom thou contempest.

760

Ahasuerus. Disdain thee?—not the worm beneath thy feet!

The Fathomless has care for meaner things
Than thou canst dream, and has made pride for those
Who would be what they may not, or would seem
That which they are not. Sultan! talk no more
Of thee and me, the Future and the Past;

765

But look on that which cannot change—the One,
The unborn and the undying. Earth and ocean,
Space, and the isles of life or light that gem

770

The sapphire floods of interstellar air,
This firmament pavilioned upon chaos,

With all its cressets of immortal fire,
Whose outwall, bastioned impregnably

Against the escape of boldest thoughts, repels them

775

As Calpe the Atlantic clouds—this Whole

Of suns, and worlds, and men, and beasts, and flowers,

With all the silent or tempestuous workings

By which they have been, are, or cease to be,

Is but a vision;—all that it inherits

780

Are motes of a sick eye, bubbles and dreams;

Thought is its cradle and its grave, nor less

The Future and the Past are idle shadows
Of thought's eternal flight—they have no being:
Nought is but that which feels itself to be. 785

Mahmud. What meanest thou? Thy words stream like a tempest
Of dazzling mist within my brain—they shake
The earth on which I stand, and hang like night
On Heaven above me. What can they avail?
They cast on all things surest, brightest, best, 790
Doubt, insecurity, astonishment.

Ahasuerus. Mistake me not! All is contained in each.
Dodona's forest to an acorn's cup
Is that which has been, or will be, to that
Which is—the absent to the present. Thought 795
Alone, and its quick elements, Will, Passion,
Reason, Imagination, cannot die;
They are, what that which they regard appears,
The stuff whence mutability can weave
All that it hath dominion o'er, worlds, worms, 800
Empires, and superstitions. What has thought
To do with time, or place, or circumstance?
Wouldst thou behold the Future?—ask and have!
Knock and it shall be opened—look, and lo!
The coming age is shadowed on the Past 805
As on a glass.

Mahmud. Wild, wilder thoughts convulse
My spirit—Did not Mahomet the Second
Win Stamboul?

Ahasuerus. Thou wouldst ask that giant spirit
The written fortunes of thy house and faith.
Thou wouldst cite one out of the grave to tell 810
How what was born in blood must die.

Mahmud. Thy words
Have power on me! I see—
Ahasuerus. What hearest thou?

Mahmud. A far whisper—
Terrible silence.

Ahasuerus. What succeeds?

Mahmud. The sound
As of the assault of an imperial city, 815
The hiss of inextinguishable fire,
The roar of giant cannon; the earthquaking
Fall of vast bastions and precipitous towers,
The shock of crags shot from strange enginery,
The clash of wheels, and clang of armed hoofs, 820
And crash of brazen mail as of the wreck
Of adamantine mountains—the mad blast
Of trumpets, and the neigh of raging steeds,
The shrieks of women whose thrill jars the blood,
And one sweet laugh, most horrible to hear, 825
As of a joyous infant waked and playing

With its dead mother's breast, and now more loud
The mingled battle-cry,—ha! hear I not
‘*Εν τούτῳ νίκη!*’ ‘Allah-illa-Allah!’?

Ahasuerus. The sulphurous mist is raised—thou seest—

Mahmud. A chasm, 830

As of two mountains, in the wall of Stamboul;
And in that ghastly breach the Islamites,
Like giants on the ruins of a world,
Stand in the light of sunrise. In the dust
Glimmers a kingless diadem, and one 835
Of regal port has cast himself beneath
The stream of war. Another proudly clad
In golden arms spurs a Tartarian barb
Into the gap, and with his iron mace
Directs the torrent of that tide of men, 840
And seems—he is—Mahomet!

Ahasuerus. What thou seest
Is but the ghost of thy forgotten dream.
A dream itself, yet less, perhaps, than that
Thou call'st reality. Thou mayst behold 845
How cities, on which Empire sleeps enthroned,
Bow their towered crests to mutability.
Poised by the flood, e'en on the height thou holdest,
Thou mayst now learn how the full tide of power
Ebbs to its depths.—Inheritor of glory,
Conceived in darkness, born in blood, and nourished 850
With tears and toil, thou seest the mortal throes
Of that whose birth was but the same. The Past
Now stands before thee like an Incarnation
Of the To-come; yet wouldst thou commune with
That portion of thyself which was ere thou 855
Didst start for this brief race whose crown is death,
Dissolve with that strong faith and fervent passion
Which called it from the uncreated deep,
Yon cloud of war, with its tempestuous phantoms
Of raging death; and draw with mighty will 860
The imperial shade hither.

[*Exit AHASUERUS. The*

Phantom of MAHOMET THE SECOND appears.

Mahmud.

Approach!

Phantom.

I come

Thence whither thou must go! The grave is fitter
To take the living than give up the dead;
Yet has thy faith prevailed, and I am here.
The heavy fragments of the power which fell 865
When I arose, like shapeless crags and clouds,
Hang round my throne on the abyss, and voices
Of strange lament soothe my supreme repose,
Wailing for glory never to return.—

A later Empire nods in its decay:
The autumn of a greener faith is come, 870

And wolfish change, like winter, howls to strip
 The foliage in which Fame, the eagle, built
 Her aerie, while Dominion whelped below.
 The storm is in its branches, and the frost 875
 Is on its leaves, and the blank deep expects
 Oblivion on oblivion, spoil on spoil,
 Ruin on ruin:—Thou art slow, my son;
 The Anarchs of the world of darkness keep
 A throne for thee, round which thine empire lies 880
 Boundless and mute; and for thy subjects thou,
 Like us, shalt rule the ghosts of murdered life,
 The phantoms of the powers who rule thee now—
 Mutinous passions, and conflicting fears,
 And hopes that sate themselves on dust, and die!— 885
 Stripped of their mortal strength, as thou of thine.
 Islam must fall, but we will reign together
 Over its ruins in the world of death:—
 And if the trunk be dry, yet shall the seed
 Unfold itself even in the shape of that 890
 Which gathers birth in its decay. Woe! woe!
 To the weak people tangled in the grasp
 Of its last spasms.

Mahmud. Spirit, woe to all!
 Woe to the wronged and the avenger! Woe
 To the destroyer, woe to the destroyed! 895
 Woe to the dupe, and woe to the deceiver!
 Woe to the oppressed, and woe to the oppressor!
 Woe both to those that suffer and inflict;
 Those who are born and those who die! but say,
 Imperial shadow of the thing I am, 900
 When, how, by whom, Destruction must accomplish
 Her consummation!

Phantom. Ask the cold pale Hour,
 Rich in reversion of impending death,
 When *he* shall fall upon whose ripe gray hairs
 Sit Care, and Sorrow, and Infirmary— 905
 The weight which Crime, whose wings are plumed with years,
 Leaves in his flight from ravaged heart to heart
 Over the heads of men, under which burthen
 They bow themselves unto the grave: fond wretch!
 He leans upon his crutch, and talks of years 910
 To come, and how in hours of youth renewed
 He will renew lost joys, and——

Voice without. Victory! Victory!

[*The Phantom vanishes.*]

Mahmud. What sound of the importunate earth has broken
 My mighty trance?

Voice without. Victory! Victory!

Mahmud. Weak lightning before darkness! poor faint smile 915
 Of dying Islam! Voice which art the response

Of hollow weakness! Do I wake and live?
 Were there such things, or may the unquiet brain,
 Vexed by the wise mad talk of the old Jew,
 Have shaped itself these shadows of its fear? 920
 It matters not!—for nought we see or dream,
 Possess, or lose, or grasp at, can be worth
 More than it gives or teaches. Come what may,
 The Future must become the Past, and I
 As they were to whom once this present hour, 925
 This gloomy crag of time to which I cling,
 Seemed an Elysian isle of peace and joy
 Never to be attained.—I must rebuke
 This drunkenness of triumph ere it die,
 And dying, bring despair. Victory! poor slaves! [*Exit MAHMUD.*
Voice without. Shout in the jubilee of death! The Greeks 931
 Are as a brood of lions in the net
 Round which the kingly hunters of the earth
 Stand smiling. Anarchs, ye whose daily food
 Are curses, groans, and gold, the fruit of death, 935
 From Thule to the girdle of the world,
 Come, feast! the board groans with the flesh of men;
 The cup is foaming with a nation's blood,
 Famine and Thirst await! eat, drink, and die!

Semichorus I.

Victorious Wrong, with vulture scream, 940
 Salutes the rising sun, pursues the flying day!
 I saw her, ghastly as a tyrant's dream,
 Perch on the trembling pyramid of night,
 Beneath which earth and all her realms pavilioned lay
 In visions of the dawning undelight. 945
 Who shall impede her flight?
 Who rob her of her prey?

Voice without. Victory! Victory! Russia's famished eagles
 Dare not to prey beneath the crescent's light.
 Impale the remnant of the Greeks! despoil!
 Violate! make their flesh cheaper than dust! 950

Semichorus II.

Thou voice which art
 The herald of the ill in splendour hid!
 Thou echo of the hollow heart
 Of monarchy, bear me to thine abode 955
 When desolation flashes o'er a world destroyed:
 Oh, bear me to those isles of jagged cloud
 Which float like mountains on the earthquake, mid
 The momentary oceans of the lightning,
 Or to some toppling promontory proud 960
 Of solid tempest whose black pyramid,

Riven, overhangs the founts intensely bright'ning
 Of those dawn-tinted deluges of fire
 Before their waves expire,
 When heaven and earth are light, and only light
 In the thunder-night!

965

Voice without. Victory! Victory! Austria, Russia, England,
 And that tame serpent, that poor shadow, France,
 Cry peace, and that means death when monarchs speak.
 Ho, there! bring torches, sharpen those red stakes,
 These chains are light, fitter for slaves and poisoners
 Than Greeks. Kill! plunder! burn! let none remain.

970

Semichorus I.

Alas! for Liberty!
 If numbers, wealth, or unfulfilling years,
 Or fate, can quell the free!
 Alas! for Virtue, when
 Torments, or contumely, or the sneers
 Of erring judging men
 Can break the heart where it abides.
 Alas! if Love, whose smile makes this obscure world splendid,
 Can change with its false times and tides,
 Like hope and terror,—
 Alas for Love!
 And Truth, who wanderest lone and unbefriended,
 If thou canst veil thy lie-consuming mirror
 Before the dazzled eyes of Error,
 Alas for thee! Image of the Above.

975

980

985

Semichorus II.

Repulse, with plumes from conquest torn,
 Led the ten thousand from the limits of the morn
 Through many an hostile Anarchy!
 At length they wept aloud, and cried, 'The Sea! the Sea!'
 Through exile, persecution, and despair,
 Rome was, and young Atlantis shall become
 The wonder, or the terror, or the tomb
 Of all whose step wakes Power lulled in her savage lair:
 But Greece was as a hermit-child,
 Whose fairest thoughts and limbs were built
 To woman's growth, by dreams so mild,
 She knew not pain or guilt;
 And now, O Victory, blush! and Empire, tremble
 When ye desert the free—
 If Greece must be
 A wreck, yet shall its fragments reassemble,
 And build themselves again impregnably
 In a diviner clime,
 To Amphionic music on some Cape sublime,
 Which frowns above the idle foam of Time.

990

995

1000

1005

Semichorus I.

Let the tyrants rule the desert they have made;
 Let the free possess the Paradise they claim;
 Be the fortune of our fierce oppressors weighed
 With our ruin, our resistance, and our name!

1010

Semichorus II.

Our dead shall be the seed of their decay,
 Our survivors be the shadow of their pride,
 Our adversity a dream to pass away—
 Their dishonour a remembrance to abide!

1015

Voice without. Victory! Victory! The bought Briton sends
 The keys of ocean to the Islamite.—
 Now shall the blazon of the cross be veiled,
 And British skill directing Othman might,
 Thunder-strike rebel victory. Oh, keep holy
 This jubilee of unrevenged blood!
 Kill! crush! despoil! Let not a Greek escape!

1020

Semichorus I.

Darkness has dawned in the East
 On the noon of time:
 The death-birds descend to their feast
 From the hungry clime.
 Let Freedom and Peace flee far
 To a sunnier strand,
 And follow Love's folding-star
 To the Evening land!

1025

1030

Semichorus II.

The young moon has fed
 Her exhausted horn
 With the sunset's fire:
 The weak day is dead,
 But the night is not born;
 And, like loveliness panting with wild desire
 While it trembles with fear and delight,
 Hesperus flies from awakening night,
 And pants in its beauty and speed with light
 Fast-flashing, soft, and bright.
 Thou beacon of love! thou lamp of the free!
 Guide us far, far away,
 To climes where now veiled by the ardour of day
 Thou art hidden
 From waves on which weary Noon
 Faints in her summer swoon,
 Between kingless continents sinless as Eden,
 Around mountains and islands inviolably
 Pranked on the sapphire sea.

1035

1040

1045

Semichorus I.

Through the sunset of hope,
 Like the shapes of a dream,
 What Paradise islands of glory gleam!
 Beneath Heaven's cope,
 Their shadows more clear float by—
 The sound of their oceans, the light of their sky,
 The music and fragrance their solitudes breathe
 Burst, like morning on dream, or like Heaven on death,
 Through the walls of our prison;
 And Greece, which was dead, is arisen!

Chorus.

The world's great age begins anew,
 The golden years return,
 The earth doth like a snake renew
 Her winter weeds outworn:
 Heaven smiles, and faiths and empires gleam,
 Like wrecks of a dissolving dream.

A brighter Hellas rears its mountains
 From waves serener far;
 A new Peneus rolls his fountains
 Against the morning star.
 Where fairer Tempes bloom, there sleep
 Young Cyclads on a sunnier deep.

A loftier Argo cleaves the main,
 Fraught with a later prize;
 Another Orpheus sings again,
 And loves, and weeps, and dies.
 A new Ulysses leaves once more
 Calypso for his native shore.

Oh, write no more the tale of Troy,
 If earth Death's scroll must be!
 Nor mix with Laian rage the joy
 Which dawns upon the free:
 Although a subtler Sphinx renew
 Riddles of death Thebes never knew.

Another Athens shall arise,
 And to remoter time
 Bequeath, like sunset to the skies,
 The splendour of its prime;
 And leave, if nought so bright may live,
 All earth can take or Heaven can give.

1057 dream. *ed.* 1822; dreams *edd.* 1839. 1068 his *ed.* 1822; its *edd.* 1839. 1072 Argo]
 Argos *ed.* 1822.

Saturn and Love their long repose 1090
 Shall burst, more bright and good
 Than all who fell, than One who rose,
 Than many unsubdued:
 Not gold, not blood, their altar dowers,
 But votive tears and symbol flowers. 1095

Oh, cease! must hate and death return?
 Cease! must men kill and die?
 Cease! drain not to its dregs the urn
 Of bitter prophecy.
 The world is weary of the past, 1100
 Oh, might it die or rest at last!

NOTES

(1) *The quenchless ashes of Milan* [l. 60, p. 454].

MILAN was the centre of the resistance of the Lombard league against the Austrian tyrant. Frederic Barbarossa burnt the city to the ground, but liberty lived in its ashes, and it rose like an exhalation from its ruin. See Sismondi's *Histoire des Républiques Italiennes*, a book which has done much towards awakening the Italians to an imitation of their great ancestors.

(2) *The Chorus* [p. 457].

The popular notions of Christianity are represented in this chorus as true in their relation to the worship they superseded, and that which in all probability they will supersede, without considering their merits in a relation more universal. The first stanza contrasts the immortality of the living and thinking beings which inhabit the planets, and to use a common and inadequate phrase, *clothe themselves in matter*, with the transience of the noblest manifestations of the external world.

The concluding verses indicate a progressive state of more or less exalted existence, according to the degree of perfection which every distinct intelligence may have attained. Let it not be supposed that I mean to dogmatise upon a subject, concerning which all men are equally ignorant, or that I think the Gordian knot of the origin of evil can be disentangled by that or any similar assertions. The received hypothesis of a Being resembling men in the moral attributes of His nature, having called us out of non-existence, and after inflicting on us the misery of the commission of error, should superadd that of the punishment and the privations consequent upon it, still would remain inexplicable and incredible. That there is a true solution of the riddle, and that in our present state that solution is unattainable by us, are propositions which may be regarded as equally certain: meanwhile, as it is the province of the poet to attach himself to those ideas which exalt and ennoble humanity, let him be permitted to have conjectured the condition of that futurity towards which we are all impelled by an inextinguishable thirst for immortality. Until better arguments can be produced than sophisms which disgrace the

1091-3 See *Editor's Note*. 1091 bright edd. 1839; wise ed. 1829 (ed. Galignani).
 1093 unsubdued edd. 1839; unwithstood ed. 1829 (ed. Galignani).

cause, this desire itself must remain the strongest and the only presumption that eternity is the inheritance of every thinking being.

(3) *No hoary priests after that Patriarch* [l. 245, p. 458].

The Greek Patriarch, after having been compelled to fulminate an anathema against the insurgents, was put to death by the Turks.

Fortunately the Greeks have been taught that they cannot buy security by degradation, and the Turks, though equally cruel, are less cunning than the smooth-faced tyrants of Europe. As to the anathema, his Holiness might as well have thrown his mitre at Mount Athos for any effect that it produced. The chiefs of the Greeks are almost all men of comprehension and enlightened views on religion and politics.

(4) *The freedman of a western poet-chief* [l. 563, p. 465].

A Greek who had been Lord Byron's servant commands the insurgents in Attica. This Greek, Lord Byron informs me, though a poet and an enthusiastic patriot, gave him rather the idea of a timid and unenterprising person. It appears that circumstances make men what they are, and that we all contain the germ of a degree of degradation or of greatness whose connection with our character is determined by events.

(5) *The Greeks expect a Saviour from the West* [l. 598, p. 466].

It is reported that this Messiah had arrived at a seaport near Lacedaemon in an American brig. The association of names and ideas is irresistibly ludicrous, but the prevalence of such a rumour strongly marks the state of popular enthusiasm in Greece.

(6) *The sound as of the assault of an imperial city* [ll. 814-15, p. 471].

For the vision of Mahmud of the taking of Constantinople in 1453, see Gibbon's *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, vol. xii. p. 223.

The manner of the invocation of the spirit of Mahomet the Second will be censured as over subtle. I could easily have made the Jew a regular conjuror, and the Phantom an ordinary ghost. I have preferred to represent the Jew as disclaiming all pretension, or even belief, in supernatural agency, and as tempting Mahmud to that state of mind in which ideas may be supposed to assume the force of sensations through the confusion of thought with the objects of thought, and the excess of passion animating the creations of imagination.

It is a sort of natural magic, susceptible of being exercised in a degree by any one who should have made himself master of the secret associations of another's thoughts.

(7) *The Chorus* [p. 477].

The final chorus is indistinct and obscure, as the event of the living drama whose arrival it foretells. Prophecies of wars, and rumours of wars, etc., may safely be made by poet or prophet in any age, but to anticipate however darkly a period of regeneration and happiness is a more hazardous exercise of the faculty which bards possess or feign. It will remind the reader '*magno nec proximus intervallo*' of Isaiah and Virgil, whose ardent spirits overleaping the actual reign of evil which we endure and bewail, already saw the possible and perhaps approaching state of society in which the '*lion shall*

lie down with the lamb,' and 'omnis feret omnia tellus.' Let these great names be my authority and my excuse.

(48) *Saturn and Love their long repose shall burst* [ll. 1090-91, p. 478].

Saturn and Love were among the deities of a real or imaginary state of innocence and happiness. *All those who fell*, or the Gods of Greece, Asia, and Egypt; the *One who rose*, or Jesus Christ, at whose appearance the idols of the Pagan World were amerced of their worship; and *the many unsubdued*, or the monstrous objects of the idolatry of China, India, the Antarctic islands, and the native tribes of America, certainly have reigned over the understandings of men in conjunction or in succession, during periods in which all we know of evil has been in a state of portentous, and, until the revival of learning and the arts, perpetually increasing, activity. The Grecian gods seem indeed to have been personally more innocent, although it cannot be said, that as far as temperance and chastity are concerned, they gave so edifying an example as their successor. The sublime human character of Jesus Christ was deformed by an imputed identification with a Power, who tempted, betrayed, and punished the innocent beings who were called into existence by His sole will; and for the period of a thousand years, the spirit of this most just, wise, and benevolent of men has been propitiated with myriads of hecatombs of those who approached the nearest to His innocence and wisdom, sacrificed under every aggravation of atrocity and variety of torture. The horrors of the Mexican, the Peruvian, and the Indian superstitions are well known.

NOTE ON HELLAS, BY MRS. SHELLEY

THE South of Europe was in a state of great political excitement at the beginning of the year 1821. The Spanish Revolution had been a signal to Italy; secret societies were formed; and, when Naples rose to declare the Constitution, the call was responded to from Brundisium to the foot of the Alps. To crush these attempts to obtain liberty, early in 1821 the Austrians poured their armies into the Peninsula: at first their coming rather seemed to add energy and resolution to a people long enslaved. The Piedmontese asserted their freedom; Genoa threw off the yoke of the King of Sardinia; and, as if in playful imitation, the people of the little state of Massa and Carrara gave the *congé* to their sovereign, and set up a republic.

Tuscany alone was perfectly tranquil. It was said that the Austrian minister presented a list of sixty Carbonari to the Grand Duke, urging their imprisonment; and the Grand Duke replied, 'I do not know whether these sixty men are Carbonari, but I know, if I imprison them, I shall directly have sixty thousand start up.' But, though the Tuscans had no desire to disturb the paternal government beneath whose shelter they slumbered, they regarded the progress of the various Italian revolutions with intense interest, and hatred for the Austrian was warm in every bosom. But they had slender hopes; they knew that the Neapolitans would offer no fit resistance to the regular German troops, and that the overthrow of the constitution in Naples would act as a decisive blow against all struggles for liberty in Italy.

We have seen the rise and progress of reform. But the Holy Alliance was alive and active in those days, and few could dream of the peaceful triumph of liberty. It seemed then that the armed assertion of freedom in the South of Europe was the only hope of the liberals, as, if it prevailed, the nations of

the north would imitate the example. Happily the reverse has proved the fact. The countries accustomed to the exercise of the privileges of freemen, to a limited extent, have extended, and are extending, these limits. Freedom and knowledge have now a chance of proceeding hand in hand; and, if it continue thus, we may hope for the durability of both. Then, as I have said—in 1821—Shelley, as well as every other lover of liberty, looked upon the struggles in Spain and Italy as decisive of the destinies of the world, probably for centuries to come. The interest he took in the progress of affairs was intense. When Genoa declared itself free, his hopes were at their highest. Day after day he read the bulletins of the Austrian army, and sought eagerly to gather tokens of its defeat. He heard of the revolt of Genoa with emotions of transport. His whole heart and soul were in the triumph of the cause. We were living at Pisa at that time; and several well-informed Italians, at the head of whom we may place the celebrated Vaccà, were accustomed to seek for sympathy in their hopes from Shelley: they did not find such for the despair they too generally experienced, founded on contempt for their southern countrymen.

While the fate of the progress of the Austrian armies then invading Naples was yet in suspense, the news of another revolution filled him with exultation. We had formed the acquaintance at Pisa of several Constantinopolitan Greeks, of the family of Prince Caradja, formerly Hospodar of Wallachia; who, hearing that the bowstring, the accustomed finale of his viceroyalty, was on the road to him, escaped with his treasures, and took up his abode in Tuscany. Among these was the gentleman to whom the drama of *Hellas* is dedicated. Prince Mavrocordato was warmed by those aspirations for the independence of his country which filled the hearts of many of his countrymen. He often intimated the possibility of an insurrection in Greece; but we had no idea of its being so near at hand, when, on the 1st of April 1821, he called on Shelley, bringing the proclamation of his cousin, Prince Ypsilanti, and, radiant with exultation and delight, declared that henceforth Greece would be free.

Shelley had hymned the dawn of liberty in Spain and Naples, in two odes dictated by the warmest enthusiasm; he felt himself naturally impelled to decorate with poetry the uprise of the descendants of that people whose works he regarded with deep admiration, and to adopt the vaticinatory character in prophesying their success. *Hellas* was written in a moment of enthusiasm. It is curious to remark how well he overcomes the difficulty of forming a drama out of such scant materials. His prophecies, indeed, came true in their general, not their particular, purport. He did not foresee the death of Lord Londonderry, which was to be the epoch of a change in English politics, particularly as regarded foreign affairs; nor that the navy of his country would fight for instead of against the Greeks, and by the battle of Navarino secure their enfranchisement from the Turks. Almost against reason, as it appeared to him, he resolved to believe that Greece would prove triumphant; and in this spirit, auguring ultimate good, yet grieving over the vicissitudes to be endured in the interval, he composed his drama.

Hellas was among the last of his compositions, and is among the most beautiful. The choruses are singularly imaginative, and melodious in their versification. There are some stanzas that beautifully exemplify Shelley's peculiar style; as, for instance, the assertion of the intellectual empire which

must be for ever the inheritance of the country of Homer, Sophocles, and Plato:—

‘But Greece and her foundations are
Built below the tide of war,
Based on the crystalline sea
Of thought and its eternity.’

And again, that philosophical truth felicitously imaged forth—

‘Revenge and Wrong bring forth their kind,
The foul cubs like their parents are,
Their den is in the guilty mind,
And Conscience feeds them with despair.’

The conclusion of the last chorus is among the most beautiful of his lyrics. The imagery is distinct and majestic; the prophecy, such as poets love to dwell upon, the Regeneration of Mankind—and that regeneration reflecting back splendour on the foregone time, from which it inherits so much of intellectual wealth, and memory of past virtuous deeds, as must render the possession of happiness and peace of tenfold value.

FRAGMENTS OF AN UNFINISHED DRAMA

[Published in part (ll. 1–69, 100–120) by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824; and again, with the notes, in *P. W.*, 1839. Lines 127–238 were printed by Dr. Garnett under the title of *The Magic Plant* in his *Relics of Shelley*, 1862. The whole was edited in its present form from the Boscombe MS. by Mr. W. M. Rossetti in 1870 (*Complete Poetical Works of P. B. S.*, Moxon, 2 vols.). ‘Written at Pisa during the late winter or early spring of 1822’ (Garnett).]

THE following fragments are part of a Drama undertaken for the amusement of the individuals who composed our intimate society, but left unfinished. I have preserved a sketch of the story as far as it had been shadowed in the poet’s mind.

An Enchantress, living in one of the islands of the Indian Archipelago, saves the life of a Pirate, a man of savage but noble nature. She becomes enamoured of him; and he, inconstant to his mortal love, for a while returns her passion; but at length, recalling the memory of her whom he left, and who laments his loss, he escapes from the Enchanted Island, and returns to his lady. His mode of life makes him again go to sea, and the Enchantress seizes the opportunity to bring him, by a spirit-brewed tempest, back to her Island.—[MRS. SHELLEY’S NOTE, 1839.]

SCENE.—*Before the Cavern of the Indian Enchantress.*

The ENCHANTRESS comes forth.

Enchantress.

HE came like a dream in the dawn of life,
He fled like a shadow before its noon;
He is gone, and my peace is turned to strife,
And I wander and wane like the weary moon.
O, sweet Echo, wake,
And for my sake
Make answer the while my heart shall break!

But my heart has a music which Echo's lips,
 Though tender and true, yet can answer not,
 And the shadow that moves in the soul's eclipse 10
 Can return not the kiss by his now forgot;
 Sweet lips! he who hath
 On my desolate path

Cast the darkness of absence, worse than death!

The ENCHANTRESS makes her spell: she is answered by a Spirit.

Spirit. Within the silent centre of the earth 15
 My mansion is; where I have lived insphered
 From the beginning, and around my sleep
 Have woven all the wondrous imagery
 Of this dim spot, which mortals call the world;
 Infinite depths of unknown elements 20
 Massed into one impenetrable mask;
 Sheets of immeasurable fire, and veins
 Of gold and stone, and adamantine iron.
 And as a veil in which I walk through Heaven
 I have wrought mountains, seas, and waves, and clouds, 25
 And lastly light, whose interfusion dawns
 In the dark space of interstellar air.

A good Spirit, who watches over the Pirate's fate, leads, in a mysterious manner, the lady of his love to the Enchanted Isle. She is accompanied by a Youth, who loves the lady, but whose passion she returns only with a sisterly affection. The ensuing scene takes place between them on their arrival at the Isle. [MRS. SHELLEY'S NOTE, 1839.]

ANOTHER SCENE

INDIAN YOUTH *and* LADY.

Indian. And, if my grief should still be dearer to me
 Than all the pleasures in the world beside,
 Why would you lighten it?—

Lady. I offer only 30
 That which I seek, some human sympathy
 In this mysterious island.

Indian. Oh! my friend,
 My sister, my beloved!—What do I say?
 My brain is dizzy, and I scarce know whether
 I speak to thee or her.

Lady. Peace, perturbed heart! 35
 I am to thee only as thou to mine,
 The passing wind which heals the brow at noon,
 And may strike cold into the breast at night,
 Yet cannot linger where it soothes the most,
 Or long soothe could it linger.

8 my omitted 1824. 15-27 Within . . . air. 1839; omitted 1824. See these lines in
 'Posthumous Poems,' 1824, p. 209: 'Song of a Spirit.' 16 have 1839; omitted 1824, p. 209.
 25 seas, and waves 1824, p. 209; seas, waves 1839. 29 pleasures] pleasure 1824.
 32-41 Assigned to INDIAN, 1824.

- Indian.* But you said 40
You also loved?
- Lady.* Loved! Oh, I love. Methinks
This word of love is fit for all the world,
And that for gentle hearts another name
Would speak of gentler thoughts than the world owns.
I have loved.
- Indian.* And thou lovest not? if so, 45
Young as thou art thou canst afford to weep.
- Lady.* Oh! would that I could claim exemption
From all the bitterness of that sweet name.
I loved, I love, and when I love no more
Let joys and grief perish, and leave despair 50
To ring the knell of youth. He stood beside me,
The embodied vision of the brightest dream,
Which like a dawn heralds the day of life;
The shadow of his presence made my world
A Paradise. All familiar things he touched, 55
All common words he spoke, became to me
Like forms and sounds of a diviner world.
He was as is the sun in his fierce youth,
As terrible and lovely as a tempest;
He came, and went, and left me what I am. 60
Alas! Why must I think how oft we two
Have sate together near the river springs,
Under the green pavilion which the willow
Spreads on the floor of the unbroken fountain,
Strewn, by the nurslings that linger there, 65
Over that islet paved with flowers and moss,
While the musk-rose leaves, like flakes of crimson snow,
Showered on us, and the dove mourned in the pine,
Sad prophetess of sorrows not her own?
The crane returned to her unfrozen haunt, 70
And the false cuckoo bade the spray good morn;
And on a wintry bough the widowed bird,
Hid in the deepest night of ivy-leaves,
Renewed the vigils of a sleepless sorrow.
I, left like her, and leaving one like her, 75
Alike abandoned and abandoning
(Oh! unlike her in this!) the gentlest youth,
Whose love had made my sorrows dear to him,
Even as my sorrow made his love to me!
- Indian.* One curse of Nature stamps in the same mould 80
The features of the wretched; and they are
As like as violet to violet,
When memory, the ghost, their odours keeps
Mid the cold relics of abandoned joy.—
Proceed.
- Lady.* He was a simple innocent boy. 85

I loved him well, but not as he desired ;
 Yet even thus he was content to be :—
 A short content, for I was——

Indian [*aside*]. God of Heaven !
 From such an islet, such a river-spring—— !
 I dare not ask her if there stood upon it 90
 A pleasure-dome surmounted by a crescent,
 With steps to the blue water. [*Aloud.*] It may be
 That Nature masks in life several copies
 Of the same lot, so that the sufferers
 May feel another's sorrow as their own, 95
 And find in friendship what they lost in love.
 That cannot be : yet it is strange that we,
 From the same scene, by the same path to this
 Realm of abandonment—— But speak ! your breath—
 Your breath is like soft music, your words are 100
 The echoes of a voice which on my heart
 Sleeps like a melody of early days.
 But as you said——

Lady. He was so awful, yet
 So beautiful in mystery and terror,
 Calming me as the loveliness of heaven 105
 Soothes the unquiet sea :—and yet not so,
 For he seemed stormy, and would often seem
 A quenchless sun masked in portentous clouds ;
 For such his thoughts, and even his actions were ;
 But he was not of them, nor they of him, 110
 But as they hid his splendour from the earth.
 Some said he was a man of blood and peril,
 And steeped in bitter infamy to the lips.
 More need was there I should be innocent,
 More need that I should be most true and kind, 115
 And much more need that there should be found one
 To share remorse and scorn and solitude,
 And all the ills that wait on those who do
 The tasks of ruin in the world of life.
 He fled, and I have followed him.

Indian. Such a one 120
 Is he who was the winter of my peace.
 But, fairest stranger, when didst thou depart
 From the far hills where rise the springs of India ?
 How didst thou pass the intervening sea ?

Lady. If I be sure I am not dreaming now, 125
 I should not doubt to say it was a dream.
 Methought a star came down from heaven,
 And rested mid the plants of India,
 Which I had given a shelter from the frost
 Within my chamber. There the meteor lay, 130
 Panting forth light among the leaves and flowers,

As if it lived, and was outworn with speed ;
 Or that it loved, and passion made the pulse
 Of its bright life throb like an anxious heart,
 Till it diffused itself, and all the chamber 135
 And walls seemed melted into emerald fire
 That burned not ; in the midst of which appeared
 A spirit like a child, and laughed aloud
 A thrilling peal of such sweet merriment
 As made the blood tingle in my warm feet : 140
 Then bent over a vase, and murmuring
 Low, unintelligible melodies,
 Placed something in the mould like melon-seeds,
 And slowly faded, and in place of it
 A soft hand issued from the veil of fire, 145
 Holding a cup like a magnolia flower,
 And poured upon the earth within the vase
 The element with which it overflowed,
 Brighter than morning light, and purer than
 The water of the springs of Himalah. 150

Indian. You waked not ?

Lady. Not until my dream became
 Like a child's legend on the tideless sand,
 Which the first foam erases half, and half
 Leaves legible. At length I rose, and went,
 Visiting my flowers from pot to pot, and thought 155
 To set new cuttings in the empty urns,
 And when I came to that beside the lattice,
 I saw two little dark-green leaves
 Lifting the light mould at their birth, and then
 I half-remembered my forgotten dream. 160
 And day by day, green as a gourd in June,
 The plant grew fresh and thick, yet no one knew
 What plant it was ; its stem and tendrils seemed
 Like emerald snakes, mottled and diamonded
 With azure mail and streaks of woven silver ; 165
 And all the sheaths that folded the dark buds
 Rose like the crest of cobra-di-capel,
 Until the golden eye of the bright flower,
 Through the dark lashes of those veined lids,
 . . . disencumbered of their silent sleep, 170
 Gazed like a star into the morning light.
 Its leaves were delicate, you almost saw
 The pulses
 With which the purple velvet flower was fed
 To overflow, and like a poet's heart 175
 Changing bright fancy to sweet sentiment,
 Changed half the light to fragrance. It soon fell,
 And to a green and dewy embryo-fruit
 Left all its treasured beauty. Day by day
 I nursed the plant, and on the double flute 180

Played to it on the sunny winter days
 Soft melodies, as sweet as April rain
 On silent leaves, and sang those words in which
 Passion makes Echo taunt the sleeping strings;
 And I would send tales of forgotten love 185
 Late into the lone night, and sing wild songs
 Of maids deserted in the olden time,
 And weep like a soft cloud in April's bosom
 Upon the sleeping eyelids of the plant,
 So that perhaps it dreamed that Spring was come, 190
 And crept abroad into the moonlight air,
 And loosened all its limbs, as, noon by noon,
 The sun averted less his oblique beam.

Indian. And the plant died not in the frost?

Lady.

It grew;

And went out of the lattice which I left 195
 Half open for it, trailing its quaint spires
 Along the garden and across the lawn,
 And down the slope of moss and through the tufts
 Of wild-flower roots, and stumps of trees o'ergrown
 With simple lichens, and old hoary stones, 200
 On to the margin of the glassy pool,
 Even to a nook of unblown violets
 And lilies-of-the-valley yet unborn,
 Under a pine with ivy overgrown.
 And there its fruit lay like a sleeping lizard 205
 Under the shadows; but when Spring indeed
 Came to unswathe her infants, and the lilies
 Peeped from their bright green masks to wonder at
 This shape of autumn couched in their recess,
 Then it dilated, and it grew until 210
 One half lay floating on the fountain wave,
 Whose pulse, elapsed in unlike sympathies,
 Kept time
 Among the snowy water-lily buds.
 Its shape was such as summer melody 215
 Of the south wind in spicy vales might give
 To some light cloud bound from the golden dawn
 To fairy isles of evening, and it seemed
 In hue and form that it had been a mirror
 Of all the hues and forms around it and 220
 Upon it pictured by the sunny beams
 Which, from the bright vibrations of the pool,
 Were thrown upon the rafters and the roof
 Of boughs and leaves, and on the pillared stems
 Of the dark sylvan temple, and reflections 225
 Of every infant flower and star of moss
 And veined leaf in the azure odorous air.
 And thus it lay in the Elysian calm
 Of its own beauty, floating on the line

Which, like a film in purest space, divided
 The heaven beneath the water from the heaven
 Above the clouds; and every day I went
 Watching its growth and wondering;
 And as the day grew hot, methought I saw
 A glassy vapour dancing on the pool,
 And on it little quaint and filmy shapes,
 With dizzy motion, wheel and rise and fall,
 Like clouds of gnats with perfect lineaments.

230

235

O friend, sleep was a veil uplift from Heaven—
 As if Heaven dawned upon the world of dream—
 When darkness rose on the extinguished day
 Out of the eastern wilderness.

240

Indian.

I too

Have found a moment's paradise in sleep
 Half compensate a hell of waking sorrow.

CHARLES THE FIRST

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DRAMATIS PERSONAE

KING CHARLES I.
 QUEEN HENRIETTA.
 LAUD, *Archbishop of Canterbury*.
 WENTWORTH, *Earl of Strafford*.
 LORD COTTINGTON.
 LORD WESTON.
 LORD COVENTRY.
 WILLIAMS, *Bishop of Lincoln*.
 Secretary LYTTETON.
 JUXON.

ST. JOHN.
 ARCHY, *the Court Fool*.
 HAMPDEN.
 PYM.
 CROMWELL.
 CROMWELL'S DAUGHTER.
 SIR HARRY VANE *the younger*.
 LEIGHTON.
 BASTWICK.
 PRYNNE.

Gentlemen of the Inns of Court, Citizens, Pursuivants, Marshalsmen, Law Students, Judges, Clerk.

SCENE I.—*The Masque of the Inns of Court.*

A Pursuivant. Place, for the Marshal of the Masque!

First Citizen. What thinkest thou of this quaint masque which turns,
 Like morning from the shadow of the night,
 The night to day, and London to a place
 Of peace and joy?

Second Citizen. And Hell to Heaven.
 Eight years are gone,

5

And they seem hours, since in this populous street
 I trod on grass made green by summer's rain,
 For the red plague kept state within that palace

Where now that vanity reigns. In nine years more
The roots will be refreshed with civil blood;
And thank the mercy of insulted Heaven
That sin and wrongs wound, as an orphan's cry,
The patience of the great Avenger's ear.

10

A Youth. Yet, father, 'tis a happy sight to see,
Beautiful, innocent, and unforbidden
By God or man;—'tis like the bright procession
Of skiey visions in a solemn dream
From which men wake as from a Paradise,
And draw new strength to tread the thorns of life.
If God be good, wherefore should this be evil?
And if this be not evil, dost thou not draw
Unseasonable poison from the flowers
Which bloom so rarely in this barren world?
Oh, kill these bitter thoughts which make the present
Dark as the future!—

15

20

25

When Avarice and Tyranny, vigilant Fear,
And open-eyed Conspiracy lie sleeping
As on Hell's threshold; and all gentle thoughts
Waken to worship Him who giveth joys
With His own gift.

30

Second Citizen. How young art thou in this old age of time!
How green in this gray world? Canst thou discern
The signs of seasons, yet perceive no hint
Of change in that stage-scene in which thou art
Not a spectator but an actor? or
Art thou a puppet moved by [enginery]?
The day that dawns in fire will die in storms,
Even though the noon be calm. My travel's done,—
Before the whirlwind wakes I shall have found
My inn of lasting rest; but thou must still
Be journeying on in this inclement air.
Wrap thy old cloak about thy back;
Nor leave the broad and plain and beaten road,
Although no flowers smile on the trodden dust,
For the violet paths of pleasure. This Charles the First
Rose like the equinoctial sun, . . .
By vapours, through whose threatening ominous veil
Darting his altered influence he has gained
This height of noon—from which he must decline
Amid the darkness of conflicting storms,
To dank extinction and to latest night . . .

35

40

45

50

There goes

10 now that vanity reigns 1870; now reigns vanity 1824.

33-7 Canst . . . *enginery* 1870;

Canst thou not think

Of change in that low scene, in which thou art

Not a spectator but an actor? . . . 1824.

43-57 Wrap . . . bold as he 1870; omitted 1824.

The apostate Strafford ; he whose titles
 whispered aphorisms 55

From Machiavel and Bacon : and, if Judas
 Had been as brazen and as bold as he——

First Citizen. That
 Is the Archbishop.

Second Citizen. Rather say the Pope :
 London will be soon his Rome : he walks
 As if he trod upon the heads of men : 60
 He looks elate, drunken with blood and gold ;—
 Beside him moves the Babylonian woman
 Invisibly, and with her as with his shadow,
 Mitred adulterer ! he is joined in sin,
 Which turns Heaven's milk of mercy to revenge. 65

Third Citizen (lifting up his eyes). Good Lord ! rain it down upon
 him ! . . .

Amid her ladies walks the papist queen,
 As if her nice feet scorned our English earth.
 The Canaanitish Jezebel ! I would be
 A dog if I might tear her with my teeth ! 70

There's old Sir Henry Vane, the Earl of Pembroke,
 Lord Essex, and Lord Keeper Coventry,
 And others who make base their English breed
 By vile participation of their honours
 With papists, atheists, tyrants, and apostates. 75
 When lawyers masque 'tis time for honest men
 To strip the vizard from their purposes.

A seasonable time for masquers this !
 When Englishmen and Protestants should sit
 dust on their dishonoured heads, 80

To avert the wrath of Him whose scourge is felt
 For the great sins which have drawn down from Heaven
 and foreign overthrow.

The remnant of the martyred saints in Rochefort
 Have been abandoned by their faithless allies 85
 To that idolatrous and adulterous torturer
 Lewis of France,—the Palatinate is lost——

Enter LEIGHTON (*who has been branded in the face*) and BASTWICK.
 Canst thou be—art thou——?

Leighton. I was Leighton : what
 I am thou seest. And yet turn thine eyes,
 And with thy memory look on thy friend's mind, 90
 Which is unchanged, and where is written deep
 The sentence of my judge.

Third Citizen. Are these the marks with which
 Laud thinks to improve the image of his Maker
 Stamped on the face of man ? Curses upon him,
 The impious tyrant !

Second Citizen. It is said besides
That lewd and papist drunkards may profane
The Sabbath with their
And has permitted that most heathenish custom
Of dancing round a pole dressed up with wreaths
On May-day.

95

100

A man who thus twice crucifies his God
May well his brother.—In my mind, friend,
The root of all this ill is prelacy.
I would cut up the root.

Third Citizen. And by what means?

Second Citizen. Smiting each Bishop under the fifth rib.

105

Third Citizen. You seem to know the vulnerable place
Of these same crocodiles.

Second Citizen. I learnt it in
Egyptian bondage, sir. Your worm of Nile
Betrays not with its flattering tears like they;
For, when they cannot kill, they whine and weep.
Nor is it half so greedy of men's bodies
As they of soul and all; nor does it wallow
In slime as they in simony and lies
And close lusts of the flesh.

110

A Marshalsman. Give place, give place!
You torch-bearers, advance to the great gate,
And then attend the Marshal of the Masque
Into the Royal presence.

115

A Law Student. What thinkest thou
Of this quaint show of ours, my agèd friend?
Even now we see the redness of the torches
Inflame the night to the eastward, and the clarions
[Gasp?] to us on the wind's wave. It comes!
And their sounds, floating hither round the pageant,
Rouse up the astonished air.

120

First Citizen. I will not think but that our country's wounds
May yet be healed. The king is just and gracious,
Though wicked counsels now pervert his will:
These once cast off—

125

Second Citizen. As adders cast their skins
And keep their venom, so kings often change;
Councils and counsellors hang on one another,
Hiding the loathsome
Like the base patchwork of a leper's rags.

130

The Youth. Oh, still those dissonant thoughts!—List how the music
Grows on the enchanted air! And see, the torches
Restlessly flashing, and the crowd divided
Like waves before an admiral's prow!

A Marshalsman. Give place
To the Marshal of the Masque!

135

108 bondage *cj. Forman*; bondages 1870.
1824. 132 how the 1870; loud 1824.

119–23 Even now . . . air 1870; omitted

A Pursuivant.

Room for the King!

The Youth. How glorious! See those thronging chariots
Rolling, like painted clouds before the wind,
Behind their solemn steeds: how some are shaped
Like curved sea-shells dyed by the azure depths
Of Indian seas; some like the new-born moon;
And some like cars in which the Romans climbed
(Canopied by Victory's eagle-wings outspread)
The Capitolian—See how gloriously
The mettled horses in the torchlight stir
Their gallant riders, while they check their pride,
Like shapes of some diviner element
Than English air, and beings nobler than
The envious and admiring multitude.

140

145

Second Citizen. Ay, there they are—
Nobles, and sons of nobles, patentees,
Monopolists, and stewards of this poor farm,
On whose lean sheep sit the prophetic crows,
Here is the pomp that strips the houseless orphan,
Here is the pride that breaks the desolate heart.
These are the lilies glorious as Solomon,
Who toil not, neither do they spin,—unless
It be the webs they catch poor rogues withal.
Here is the surfeit which to them who earn
The niggard wages of the earth, scarce leaves
The tithe that will support them till they crawl
Back to her cold hard bosom. Here is health
Followed by grim disease, glory by shame,
Waste by lame famine, wealth by squalid want,
And England's sin by England's punishment.
And, as the effect pursues the cause foregone,
Lo, giving substance to my words, behold
At once the sign and the thing signified—
A troop of cripples, beggars, and lean outcasts,
Horsed upon stumbling jades, carted with dung,
Dragged for a day from cellars and low cabins
And rotten hiding-holes, to point the moral
Of this presentment, and bring up the rear
Of painted pomp with misery!

150

155

160

165

170

The Youth.

'Tis but

The anti-masque, and serves as discords do
In sweetest music. Who would love May flowers
If they succeeded not to Winter's flaw;
Or day unchanged by night; or joy itself
Without the touch of sorrow?

175

136 *A Pursuivant.* Room for the King! 1870; omitted 1824. 138-40 Rolling... depths 1870;
Rolling like painted clouds before the wind

Some are

Like curved shells, dyed by the azure depths 1824.

162 her 1870; its 1824.

170 jades 1870; shapes 1824.

173 presentment 1870;

presentiment 1824.

Second Citizen.

I and thou——

A Marshalsman. Place, give place!

180

SCENE II.—*A Chamber in Whitehall. Enter the KING, QUEEN, LAUD, LORD STRAFFORD, LORD COTTINGTON, and other Lords; ARCHY; also ST. JOHN, with some Gentlemen of the Inns of Court.*

King. Thanks, gentlemen. I heartily accept
This token of your service: your gay masque
Was performed gallantly. And it shows well
When subjects twine such flowers of [observance?]
With the sharp thorns that deck the English crown.
A gentle heart enjoys what it confers,
Even as it suffers that which it inflicts,
Though Justice guides the stroke.
Accept my hearty thanks.

5

Queen. And gentlemen,
Call your poor Queen your debtor. Your quaint pageant
Rose on me like the figures of past years,
Treading their still path back to infancy,
More beautiful and mild as they draw nearer
The quiet cradle. I could have almost wept
To think I was in Paris, where these shows
Are well devised—such as I was ere yet
My young heart shared a portion of the burthen,
The careful weight, of this great monarchy.
There, gentlemen, between the sovereign's pleasure
And that which it regards, no clamour lifts
Its proud interposition.

10

In Paris ribald censors dare not move
Their poisonous tongues against these sinless sports;
And *his* smile

Warms those who bask in it, as ours would do
If . . . Take my heart's thanks: add them, gentlemen,
To those good words which, were he King of France,
My royal lord would turn to golden deeds.

25

St. John. Madam, the love of Englishmen can make
The lightest favour of their lawful king
Outweigh a despot's.—We humbly take our leaves,
Enriched by smiles which France can never buy.

30

[*Exeunt ST. JOHN and the Gentlemen of the Inns of Court.*]

King. My Lord Archbishop,
Mark you what spirit sits in St. John's eyes?
Thinks it is too saucy for this presence.

35

Archy. Yes, pray your Grace look: for, like an unsophisticated [eye]
sees everything upside down, you who are wise will discern the shadow
of an idiot in lawn sleeves and a rochet setting springes to catch wood-
cocks in haymaking time. Poor Archy, whose owl-eyes are tempered to
the error of his age, and because he is a fool, and by special ordinance of

179, 180 I . . . place! 1870; omitted 1824.
22–88 In Paris . . . rebuke 1870; omitted 1824.

3–9 And . . . thanks 1870; omitted 1824

God forbidden ever to see himself as he is, sees now in that deep eye a blindfold devil sitting on the ball, and weighing words out between king and subjects. One scale is full of promises, and the other full of protestations: and then another devil creeps behind the first out of the dark windings [of a] pregnant lawyer's brain, and takes the bandage from the other's eyes, and throws a sword into the left-hand scale, for all the world like my Lord Essex's there. 47

Strafford. A rod in pickle for the Fool's back!

Archy. Ay, and some are now smiling whose tears will make the brine; for the Fool sees——

Strafford. Insolent! You shall have your coat turned and be whipped out of the palace for this. 52

Archy. When all the fools are whipped, and all the Protestant writers, while the knaves are whipping the fools ever since a thief was set to catch a thief. If all turncoats were whipped out of palaces, poor Archy would be disgraced in good company. Let the knaves whip the fools, and all the fools laugh at it. [Let the] wise and godly slit each other's noses and ears (having no need of any sense of discernment in their craft); and the knaves, to marshal them, join in a procession to Bedlam, to entreat the madmen to omit their sublime Platonic contemplations, and manage the state of England. Let all the honest men who lie [pinched?] up at the prisons or the pillories, in custody of the pursuivants of the High-Commission Court, marshal them. 63

Enter Secretary LYTTTELTON, with papers.

King (looking over the papers). These stiff Scots
His Grace of Canterbury must take order
To force under the Church's yoke.—You, Wentworth,
Shall be myself in Ireland, and shall add
Your wisdom, gentleness, and energy,
To what in me were wanting.—My Lord Weston,
Look that those merchants draw not without loss 70
Their bullion from the Tower; and, on the payment
Of shipmoney, take fullest compensation
For violation of our royal forests,
Whose limits, from neglect, have been o'ergrown
With cottages and cornfields. The uttermost 75
Farthing exact from those who claim exemption
From knighthood: that which once was a reward
Shall thus be made a punishment, that subjects
May know how majesty can wear at will
The rugged mood.—My Lord of Coventry, 80
Lay my command upon the Courts below
That bail be not accepted for the prisoners
Under the warrant of the Star Chamber.
The people shall not find the stubbornness
Of Parliament a cheap or easy method 85
Of dealing with their rightful sovereign:
And doubt not this, my Lord of Coventry,

62 pinched marked as doubtful by Rossetti, 1870; Forman, Dowden; penned Woodberry.

We will find time and place for fit rebuke.—
My Lord of Canterbury.

Archy. The fool is here.

Laud. I crave permission of your Majesty
To order that this insolent fellow be
Chastised: he mocks the sacred character,
Scoffs at the state, and—

King. What, my Archy?
He mocks and mimics all he sees and hears,
Yet with a quaint and graceful licence—Prithee
For this once do not as Prynne would, were he

Primate of England. With your Grace's leave,
He lives in his own world; and, like a parrot
Hung in his gilded prison from the window
Of a queen's bower over the public way,
Blasphemes with a bird's mind:—his words, like arrows
Which know no aim beyond the archer's wit,
Strike sometimes what eludes philosophy.—

(*To ARCHY.*) Go, sirrah, and repent of your offence
Ten minutes in the rain; be it your penance

To bring news how the world goes there. [*Exit ARCHY.*]

Poor Archy!

He weaves about himself a world of mirth
Out of the wreck of ours.

Laud. I take with patience, as my Master did,
All scoffs permitted from above.

King. My lord,
Pray overlook these papers. Archy's words
Had wings, but these have talons.

Queen. And the lion
That wears them must be tamed. My dearest lord,
I see the new-born courage in your eye
Armed to strike dead the Spirit of the Time,

Which spurs to rage the many-headed beast.

Do thou persist: for, faint but in resolve,

And it were better thou hadst still remained

The slave of thine own slaves, who tear like curs

The fugitive, and flee from the pursuer;

And Opportunity, that empty wolf,

Flies at his throat who falls. Subdue thy actions

Even to the disposition of thy purpose,

And be that tempered as the Ebro's steel;

And banish weak-eyed Mercy to the weak,

Whence she will greet thee with a gift of peace,

And not betray thee with a traitor's kiss,

As when she keeps the company of rebels,

Who think that she is Fear. This do, lest we

93 state 1870; stake 1824.

104-8 Go . . . ours spoken by THE QUEEN, 1824.

116 Which . . . beast 1870; omitted 1824.

97 With your Grace's leave 1870; omitted 1824.

114 your 1824; thine 1870.

Should fall as from a glorious pinnacle
 In a bright dream, and wake as from a dream
 Out of our worshipped state.

130

King. Belovèd friend,

God is my witness that this weight of power,
 Which He sets me my earthly task to wield
 Under His law, is my delight and pride
 Only because thou lovest that and me.

135

For a king bears the office of a God
 To all the under world; and to his God
 Alone he must deliver up his trust,
 Unshorn of its permitted attributes.

140

[It seems] now as the baser elements
 Had mutinied against the golden sun
 That kindles them to harmony, and quells
 Their self-destroying rapine. The wild million
 Strike at the eye that guides them; like as humours
 Of the distempered body that conspire
 Against the spirit of life throned in the heart,—
 And thus become the prey of one another,
 And last of death—

145

Strafford. That which would be ambition in a subject
 Is duty in a sovereign; for on him,

150

As on a keystone, hangs the arch of life,
 Whose safety is its strength. Degree and form,
 And all that makes the age of reasoning man
 More memorable than a beast's, depend on this—
 That Right should fence itself inviolably
 With Power; in which respect the state of England
 From usurpation by the insolent commons
 Cries for reform.

155

Get treason, and spare treasure. Fee with coin
 The loudest murmurers; feed with jealousies
 Opposing factions,—be thyself of none;
 And borrow gold of many, for those who lend
 Will serve thee till thou payest them; and thus
 Keep the fierce spirit of the hour at bay,
 Till time, and its coming generations
 Of nights and days unborn, bring some one chance,

160

165

Or war or pestilence or Nature's self,—
 By some distemperature or terrible sign,
 Be as an arbiter betwixt themselves.

170

Nor let your Majesty
 Doubt here the peril of the unseen event.
 How did your brother Kings, coheritors
 In your high interest in the subject earth,
 Rise past such troubles to that height of power
 Where now they sit, and awfully serene

175

Smile on the trembling world? Such popular storms
 Philip the Second of Spain, this Lewis of France,
 And late the German head of many bodies,
 And every petty lord of Italy, 180
 Quelled or by arts or arms. Is England poorer
 Or feebler? or art thou who wield'st her power
 Tamer than they? or shall this island be—
 [Girdled] by its inviolable waters—
 To the world present and the world to come 185
 Sole pattern of extinguished monarchy?
 Not if thou dost as I would have thee do.

King. Your words shall be my deeds:
 You speak the image of my thought. My friend
 (If Kings can have a friend, I call thee so), 190
 Beyond the large commission which [belongs]
 Under the great seal of the realm, take this:
 And, for some obvious reasons, let there be
 No seal on it, except my kingly word
 And honour as I am a gentleman. 195
 Be—as thou art within my heart and mind—
 Another self, here and in Ireland:
 Do what thou judgest well, take amplest licence,
 And stick not even at questionable means.
 Hear me, Wentworth. My word is as a wall 200
 Between thee and this world thine enemy—
 That hates thee, for thou lovest me.

Strafford. I own
 No friend but thee, no enemies but thine:
 Thy lightest thought is my eternal law.
 How weak, how short, is life to pay—

King. Peace, peace. 205

Thou ow'st me nothing yet.
 (To LAUD.) My lord, what say
 Those papers?

Laud. Your Majesty has ever interposed,
 In lenity towards your native soil,
 Between the heavy vengeance of the Church 210
 And Scotland. Mark the consequence of warming
 This brood of northern vipers in your bosom.
 The rabble, instructed no doubt
 By Loudon, Lindsay, Hume, and false Argyll
 (For the waves never menace heaven until 215
 Scourged by the wind's invisible tyranny),
 Have in the very temple of the Lord
 Done outrage to His chosen ministers.
 They scorn the liturgy of the Holy Church,
 Refuse to obey her canons, and deny 220
 The apostolic power with which the Spirit
 Has filled its elect vessels, even from him
 Who held the keys with power to loose and bind,

To him who now pleads in this royal presence.—
 Let ample powers and new instructions be 225
 Sent to the High Commissioners in Scotland.
 To death, imprisonment, and confiscation,
 Add torture, add the ruin of the kindred
 Of the offender, add the brand of infamy,
 Add mutilation: and if this suffice not, 230
 Unleash the sword and fire, that in their thirst
 They may lick up that scum of schismatics.
 I laugh at those weak rebels who, desiring
 What we possess, still prate of Christian peace,
 As if those dreadful arbitrating messengers 235
 Which play the part of God 'twixt right and wrong,
 Should be let loose against the innocent sleep
 Of templed cities and the smiling fields,
 For some poor argument of policy
 Which touches our own profit or our pride 240
 (Where it indeed were Christian charity
 To turn the cheek even to the smiter's hand);
 And, when our great Redeemer, when our God,
 When He who gave, accepted, and retained
 Himself in propitiation of our sins, 245
 Is scorned in His immediate ministry,
 With hazard of the inestimable loss
 Of all the truth and discipline which is
 Salvation to the extremest generation
 Of men innumerable, they talk of peace! 250
 Such peace as Canaan found, let Scotland now:
 For, by that Christ who came to bring a sword,
 Not peace, upon the earth, and gave command
 To His disciples at the Passover
 That each should sell his robe and buy a sword,— 255
 Once strip that minister of naked wrath,
 And it shall never sleep in peace again
 Till Scotland bend or break.

King. My Lord Archbishop,
 Do what thou wilt and what thou canst in this.
 Thy earthly even as thy heavenly King 260
 Gives thee large power in his unquiet realm.
 But we want money, and my mind misgives me
 That for so great an enterprise, as yet,
 We are unfurnished.

Strafford. Yet it may not long
 Rest on our wills.

Cottingham. The expenses 265
 Of gathering shipmoney, and of distraining

235 arbitrating messengers 1870; messengers of wrath 1824. 237 the 1870; omitted 1824.
 241, 242 Parentheses inserted 1870. 244, 245 When He ... sins 1870; omitted 1824.
 246 ministry 1870; ministers 1824. 247-50 With ... innumerable 1870; omitted 1824.
 252-445 For, by ... I'll go in 1870; omitted 1824.

For every petty rate (for we encounter
A desperate opposition inch by inch
In every warehouse and on every farm),
Have swallowed up the gross sum of the imposts ;
So that, though felt as a most grievous scourge
Upon the land, they stand us in small stead
As touches the receipt.

'Tis a conclusion
 Most arithmetical: and thence you infer
 Perhaps the assembling of a parliament. 275
 Now, if a man should call his dearest enemies
 To sit in licensed judgement on his life,
 His Majesty might wisely take that course. [*Aside to COTTINGTON.*
 It is enough to expect from these lean imposts
 That they perform the office of a scourge, 280
 Without more profit. (*Aloud.*) Fines and confiscations,
 And a forced loan from the refractory city,
 Will fill our coffers: and the golden love
 Of loyal gentlemen and noble friends
 For the worshipped father of our common country, 285
 With contributions from the catholics,
 Will make Rebellion pale in our excess.
 Be these the expedients until time and wisdom
 Shall frame a settled state of government.

[illegible]

Strafford. And the love which is,
If loyal hearts could turn their blood to gold.

Laud. Both now grow barren: and I speak it not
As loving parliaments, which, as they have been
In the right hand of bold bad mighty kings
The scourges of the bleeding Church, I hate.
Methinks they scarcely can deserve our fear.

Strafford. Oh! my dear liege, take back the wealth thou gavest :
 With that, take all I held, but as in trust 300
 For thee, of mine inheritance: leave me but
 This unprovided body for thy service,
 And a mind dedicated to no care
 Except thy safety:—but assemble not
 A parliament. Hundreds will bring, like me, 305
 Their fortunes, as they would their blood, before——

King. No! thou who judgest them art but one. Alas!
We should be too much out of love with Heaven,
Did this vile world show many such as thee,
Thou perfect, just, and honourable man!
Never shall it be said that Charles of England
Stripped those he loved for fear of those he scorns;
Nor will he so much misbecome his throne
As to impoverish those who most adorn

And best defend it. That you urge, dear Strafford, 315
Inclines me rather——

Queen. To a parliament?
Is this thy firmness? and thou wilt preside
Over a knot of censurers,
To the unswearing of thy best resolves,
And choose the worst, when the worst comes too soon? 320
Plight not the worst before the worst must come.
Oh, wilt thou smile whilst our ribald foes,
Dressed in their own usurped authority,
Sharpen their tongues on Henrietta's fame?
It is enough! Thou lovest me no more! [Weeps.]

King. Oh, Henrietta! [They talk apart. 326]

Cottington (to LAUD). Money we have none:
And all the expedients of my Lord of Strafford
Will scarcely meet the arrears.

Laud. Without delay
An army must be sent into the north;
Followed by a Commission of the Church, 330
With amplest power to quench in fire and blood,
And tears and terror, and the pity of hell,
The intenser wrath of Heresy. God will give
Victory; and victory over Scotland give
The lion England tamed into our hands. 335
That will lend power, and power bring gold.

Cottington. Meanwhile
We must begin first where your Grace leaves off.
Gold must give power, or——

Laud. I am not averse
From the assembling of a parliament.
Strong actions and smooth words might teach them soon 340
The lesson to obey. And are they not
A bubble fashioned by the monarch's mouth,
The birth of one light breath? If they serve no purpose,
A word dissolves them.

Strafford. The engine of parliaments
Might be deferred until I can bring over
The Irish regiments: they will serve to assure 345
The issue of the war against the Scots.
And, this game won—which if lost, all is lost—
Gather these chosen leaders of the rebels,
And call them, if you will, a parliament. 350

King. Oh, be our feet still tardy to shed blood,
Guilty though it may be! I would still spare
The stubborn country of my birth, and ward
From countenances which I loved in youth
The wrathful Church's lacerating hand. 355
(To LAUD.) Have you o'erlooked the other articles?

[Re-enter ARCHY.
Laud. Hazlerig, Hampden, Pym, young Harry Vane,

Cromwell, and other rebels of less note,
Intend to sail with the next favouring wind
For the Plantations.

Archy. Where they think to found
A commonwealth like Gonzalo's in the play,
Gynaecocoenic and pantisocratic.

King. What's that, sirrah?

Archy. New devil's politics.
Hell is the pattern of all commonwealths:
Lucifer was the first republican.

Will you hear Merlin's prophecy, how three [posts?]

'In one brainless skull, when the whitethorn is full,
Shall sail round the world, and come back again:

Shall sail round the world in a brainless skull,

And come back again when the moon is at full:—

When, in spite of the Church,
They will hear homilies of whatever length
Or form they please.

[*Cottington?*] So please your Majesty to sign this order
For their detention.

Archy. If your Majesty were tormented night and day by fever, gout,
rheumatism, and stone, and asthma, etc., and you found these diseases
had secretly entered into a conspiracy to abandon you, should you
think it necessary to lay an embargo on the port by which they meant
to dispeople your unquiet kingdom of man?

King. If fear were made for kings, the Fool mocks wisely;
But in this case— (*writing*). Here, my lord, take the warrant,
And see it duly executed forthwith.—

That imp of malice and mockery shall be punished.

[*Exeunt all but KING, QUEEN, and ARCHY.*]

Archy. Ay, I am the physician of whom Plato prophesied, who was
to be accused by the confectioner before a jury of children, who found
him guilty without waiting for the summing-up, and hanged him without
benefit of clergy. Thus Baby Charles, and the Twelfth-night Queen of
Hearts, and the overgrown schoolboy Cottington, and that little
urchin Laud—who would reduce a verdict of 'guilty, death,' by famine,
if it were impregnable by composition—all impannelled against poor
Archy for presenting them bitter physic the last day of the holidays.

Queen. Is the rain over, sirrah?

King. When it rains

And the sun shines, 'twill rain again to-morrow:
And therefore never smile till you've done crying.

Archy. But 'tis all over now: like the April anger of woman, the
gentle sky has wept itself serene.

Queen. What news abroad? how looks the world this morning?

Archy. Gloriously as a grave covered with virgin flowers. There's
a rainbow in the sky. Let your Majesty look at it, for

'A rainbow in the morning
Is the shepherd's warning;'

361 Gonzalo's 1870; Gonzaga Boscombe MS.

and the flocks of which you are the pastor are scattered among the mountain-tops, where every drop of water is a flake of snow, and the breath of May pierces like a January blast. 405

King. The sheep have mistaken the wolf for their shepherd, my poor boy; and the shepherd, the wolves for their watchdogs.

Queen. But the rainbow was a good sign, Archy: it says that the waters of the deluge are gone, and can return no more. 409

Archy. Ay, the salt-water one: but that of tears and blood must yet come down, and that of fire follow, if there be any truth in lies.—The rainbow hung over the city with all its shops, . . . and churches, from north to south, like a bridge of congregated lightning pieced by the masonry of heaven—like a balance in which the angel that distributes the coming hour was weighing that heavy one whose poise is now felt in the lightest hearts, before it bows the proudest heads under the meanest feet. 417

Queen. Who taught you this trash, sirrah?

Archy. A torn leaf out of an old book trampled in the dirt.—But for the rainbow. It moved as the sun moved, and . . . until the top of the Tower . . . of a cloud through its left-hand tip, and Lambeth Palace look as dark as a rock before the other. Methought I saw a crown figured upon one tip, and a mitre on the other. So, as I had heard treasures were found where the rainbow quenches its points upon the earth, I set off, and at the Tower—— But I shall not tell your Majesty what I found close to the closet-window on which the rainbow had glimmered.

King. Speak: I will make my Fool my conscience. 427

Archy. Then conscience is a fool.—I saw there a cat caught in a rat-trap. I heard the rats squeak behind the wainscots: it seemed to me that the very mice were consulting on the manner of her death. 430

Queen. Archy is shrewd and bitter.

Archy.

Like the season,

So blow the winds.—But at the other end of the rainbow, where the gray rain was tempered along the grass and leaves by a tender interfusion of violet and gold in the meadows beyond Lambeth, what think you that I found instead of a mitre? 435

King. Vane's wits perhaps.

Archy.

Something as vain. I saw

a gross vapour hovering in a stinking ditch over the carcass of a dead ass, some rotten rags, and broken dishes—the wrecks of what once administered to the stuffing-out and the ornament of a worm of worms. His Grace of Canterbury expects to enter the New Jerusalem some Palm Sunday in triumph on the ghost of this ass. 441

Queen. Enough, enough! Go desire Lady Jane
She place my lute, together with the music
Mari received last week from Italy,
In my boudoir, and——

[Exit ARCHY.]

King.

I'll go in.

Queen.

My beloved lord,

445

Have you not noted that the Fool of late
Has lost his careless mirth, and that his words
Sound like the echoes of our saddest fears?

What can it mean? I should be loth to think
Some factious slave had tutored him.

King.

Oh, no!

450

He is but Occasion's pupil. Partly 'tis
That our minds piece the vacant intervals
Of his wild words with their own fashioning,—
As in the imagery of summer clouds,
Or coals of the winter fire, idlers find
The perfect shadows of their teeming thoughts:
And partly, that the terrors of the time
Are sown by wandering Rumour in all spirits;
And in the lightest and the least, may best
Be seen the current of the coming wind.

455

460

Queen. Your brain is overwrought with these deep thoughts.

Come, I will sing to you; let us go try

These airs from Italy; and, as we pass

The gallery, we'll decide where that Correggio

Shall hang—the Virgin Mother

465

With her child, born the King of heaven and earth,

Whose reign is men's salvation. And you shall see

A cradled miniature of yourself asleep,

Stamped on the heart by never-erring love;

Liker than any Vandyke ever made,

470

A pattern to the unborn age of thee,

Over whose sweet beauty I have wept for joy

A thousand times, and now should weep for sorrow,

Did I not think that after we were dead

Our fortunes would spring high in him, and that

475

The cares we waste upon our heavy crown

Would make it light and glorious as a wreath

Of Heaven's beams for his dear innocent brow.

King. Dear Henrietta!

SCENE III.—*The Star Chamber, LAUD, JUXON, STRAFFORD, and others,
as Judges. PRYNNE as a Prisoner, and then BASTWICK.*

Laud. Bring forth the prisoner Bastwick: let the clerk
Recite his sentence.

Clerk.

'That he pay five thousand

Pounds to the king, lose both his ears, be branded

With red-hot iron on the cheek and forehead,

And be imprisoned within Lancaster Castle

5

During the pleasure of the Court.'

Laud.

Prisoner,

If you have aught to say wherefore this sentence

Should not be put into effect, now speak.

Juxon. If you have aught to plead in mitigation,
Speak.

Bastwick. Thus, my lords. If, like the prelates, I

10

450, 451 Oh . . . pupil 1870; omitted 1824.

451 Partly 'tis 1870; It partly is 1824.

455 of 1870; in 1824.

463-7 and, as . . . salvation 1870; omitted 1824.

Scene III.

1-69 Bring . . . utmost 1870; omitted 1824.

Were an invader of the royal power,
 A public scorner of the word of God,
 Profane, idolatrous, popish, superstitious,
 Impious in heart and in tyrannic act,
 Void of wit, honesty, and temperance; 15
 If Satan were my lord, as theirs,—our God
 Pattern of all I should avoid to do;
 Were I an enemy of my God and King
 And of good men, as ye are;—I should merit
 Your fearful state and gilt prosperity, 20
 Which, when ye wake from the last sleep, shall turn
 To cowls and robes of everlasting fire.
 But, as I am, I bid ye grudge me not
 The only earthly favour ye can yield,
 Or I think worth acceptance at your hands,— 25
 Scorn, mutilation, and imprisonment.

even as my Master did,
 Until Heaven's kingdom shall descend on earth,
 Or earth be like a shadow in the light
 Of Heaven absorbed—some few tumultuous years 30
 Will pass, and leave no wreck of what opposes
 His will whose will is power.

Laud. Officer, take the prisoner from the bar,
 And be his tongue slit for his insolence.

Bastwick. While this hand holds a pen——

Laud. Be his hands——

Juxon. Stop! 35

Forbear, my lord! The tongue, which now can speak
 No terror, would interpret, being dumb,
 Heaven's thunder to our harm; . . .
 And hands, which now write only their own shame,
 With bleeding stumps might sign our blood away. 40

Laud. Much more such 'mercy' among men would be,
 Did all the ministers of Heaven's revenge
 Flinch thus from earthly retribution. I
 Could suffer what I would inflict. [*Exit BASTWICK guarded.*]

Bring up

The Lord Bishop of Lincoln.—
 (*To STRAFFORD.*) Know you not 45
 That, in distraining for ten thousand pounds
 Upon his books and furniture at Lincoln,
 Were found these scandalous and seditious letters
 Sent from one Osbaldistone, who is fled?
 I speak it not as touching this poor person; 50
 But of the office which should make it holy,
 Were it as vile as it was ever spotless.
 Mark too, my lord, that this expression strikes
 His Majesty, if I misinterpret not.

27-32 even . . . power printed as a fragment, Garnett, 1862; inserted here conjecturally, Rossetti, 1870.

Enter BISHOP WILLIAMS *guarded*.

Strafford. 'Twere politic and just that Williams taste
The bitter fruit of his connection with
The schismatics. But you, my Lord Archbishop,
Who owed your first promotion to his favour,
Who grew beneath his smile—— 55

Laud. Would therefore beg
The office of his judge from this High Court,—
That it shall seem, even as it is, that I,
In my assumption of this sacred robe,
Have put aside all worldly preference,
All sense of all distinction of all persons,
All thoughts but of the service of the Church.— 60
Bishop of Lincoln! 65

Williams. Peace, proud hierarch!
I know my sentence, and I own it just.
Thou wilt repay me less than I deserve,
In stretching to the utmost

SCENE IV.—HAMPDEN, PYM, CROMWELL, *his Daughter*, and young
SIR HARRY VANE.

Hampden. England, farewell! thou, who hast been my cradle,
Shalt never be my dungeon or my grave!
I held what I inherited in thee
As pawn for that inheritance of freedom
Which thou hast sold for thy despoiler's smile: 5
How can I call thee England, or my country?—
Does the wind hold?

Vane. The vanes sit steady
Upon the Abbey towers. The silver lightnings
Of the evening star, spite of the city's smoke,
Tell that the north wind reigns in the upper air. 10
Mark too that flock of fleecy-winged clouds
Sailing athwart St. Margaret's.

Hampden. Hail, fleet herald
Of tempest! that rude pilot who shall guide
Hearts free as his, to realms as pure as thee,
Beyond the shot of tyranny, 15
Beyond the webs of that swollen spider . . .
Beyond the curses, calumnies, and [lies?]
Of atheist priests! And thou
Fair star, whose beam lies on the wide Atlantic,
Athwart its zones of tempest and of calm, 20
Bright as the path to a beloved home,
Oh, light us to the isles of the evening land!
Like floating Edens cradled in the glimmer
Of sunset, through the distant mist of years
Touched by departing hope, they gleam! lone regions, 25

11 flock 1824; fleet 1870. 13 rude 1870; wild 1824. 16-18 Beyond . . . priests
1870; omitted 1824. 25 Touched 1870; Tinged 1824.

Where Power's poor dupes and victims yet have never
 Propitiated the savage fear of kings
 With purest blood of noblest hearts; whose dew
 Is yet unstained with tears of those who wake
 To weep each day the wrongs on which it dawns; 30
 Whose sacred silent air owns yet no echo
 Of formal blasphemies; nor impious rites
 Wrest man's free worship, from the God who loves,
 To the poor worm who envies us His love!
 Receive, thou young of Paradise. 35
 These exiles from the old and sinful world!

This glorious clime, this firmament, whose lights
 Dart mitigated influence through their veil
 Of pale blue atmosphere; whose tears keep green
 The pavement of this moist all-feeding earth; 40
 This vaporous horizon, whose dim round
 Is bastioned by the circumfluous sea,
 Repelling invasion from the sacred towers,
 Presses upon me like a dungeon's grate,
 A low dark roof, a damp and narrow wall. 45
 The boundless universe
 Becomes a cell too narrow for the soul
 That owns no master; while the loathliest ward
 Of this wide prison, England, is a nest
 Of cradling peace built on the mountain tops,— 50
 To which the eagle spirits of the free,
 Which range through heaven and earth, and scorn the storm
 Of time, and gaze upon the light of truth,
 Return to brood on thoughts that cannot die
 And cannot be repelled. 55
 Like eaglets floating in the heaven of time,
 They soar above their quarry, and shall stoop
 Through palaces and temples thunderproof.

SCENE V

Archy. I'll go live under the ivy that overgrows the terrace, and
 count the tears shed on its old [roots?] as the [wind?] plays the song of
 'A widow bird sate mourning
 Upon a wintry bough.'

[*Sings*]

Heigho! the lark and the owl! 5
 One flies the morning, and one lulls the night:—
 Only the nightingale, poor fond soul,
 Sings like the fool through darkness and light.

34 To the poor 1870; Towards the 1824. 38 their 1870; the 1824. 46 boundless 1870;
 mighty 1824. 48 owns no 1824; owns a 1870. ward 1870; spot 1824. 50 cradling
 1870; cradled 1824. 54, 55 Return . . . repelled 1870;

Return to brood over the [] thoughts

That cannot die, and may not be repelled 1824.

56-8 Like . . . thunderproof 1870; omitted 1824. Scene V. 1-8 I'll . . . light 1870; omitted 1824.

'A widow bird sate mourning for her love
 Upon a wintry bough;
 The frozen wind crept on above,
 The freezing stream below.

10

'There was no leaf upon the forest bare,
 No flower upon the ground,
 And little motion in the air
 Except the mill-wheel's sound.'

15

THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE

[Composed at Lerici on the Gulf of Spezzia in the spring and early summer of 1822—the poem on which Shelley was engaged at the time of his death. Published by Mrs. Shelley in the *Posthumous Poems* of 1824, pp. 73-95. Several emendations, the result of Dr. Garnett's examination of the Boscombe MS., were given to the world by Miss Mathilde Blind, *Westminster Review*, July, 1870. The poem was, of course, included in the *Poetical Works*, 1839, both edd. See Editor's Notes.]

SWIFT as a spirit hastening to his task
 Of glory and of good, the Sun sprang forth
 Rejoicing in his splendour, and the mask

Of darkness fell from the awakened Earth—
 The smokeless altars of the mountain snows
 Flamed above crimson clouds, and at the birth

5

Of light, the Ocean's orison arose,
 To which the birds tempered their matin lay.
 All flowers in field or forest which unclose

Their trembling eyelids to the kiss of day,
 Swinging their censers in the element,
 With orient incense lit by the new ray

10

Burned slow and unconsumably, and sent
 Their odorous sighs up to the smiling air;
 And, in succession due, did continent,

15

Isle, ocean, and all things that in them wear
 The form and character of mortal mould,
 Rise as the Sun their father rose, to bear

Their portion of the toil, which he of old
 Took as his own, and then imposed on them:
 But I, whom thoughts which must remain untold

20

Had kept as wakeful as the stars that gem
 The cone of night, now they were laid asleep
 Stretched my faint limbs beneath the hoary stem

Which an old chestnut flung athwart the steep 25
 Of a green Apennine: before me fled
 The night; behind me rose the day; the deep
 Was at my feet, and Heaven above my head,—
 When a strange trance over my fancy grew
 Which was not slumber, for the shade it spread 30
 Was so transparent, that the scene came through
 As clear as when a veil of light is drawn
 O'er evening hills they glimmer; and I knew
 That I had felt the freshness of that dawn
 Bathe in the same cold dew my brow and hair, 35
 And sate as thus upon that slope of lawn
 Under the self-same bough, and heard as there
 The birds, the fountains and the ocean hold
 Sweet talk in music through the enamoured air,
 And then a vision on my brain was rolled. 40

As in that trance of wondrous thought I lay,
 This was the tenour of my waking dream:—
 Methought I sate beside a public way
 Thick strewn with summer dust, and a great stream
 Of people there was hurrying to and fro, 45
 Numerous as gnats upon the evening gleam,
 All hastening onward, yet none seemed to know
 Whither he went, or whence he came, or why
 He made one of the multitude, and so
 Was borne amid the crowd, as through the sky 50
 One of the million leaves of summer's bier;
 Old age and youth, manhood and infancy,
 Mixed in one mighty torrent did appear,
 Some flying from the thing they feared, and some
 Seeking the object of another's fear; 55
 And others, as with steps towards the tomb,
 Pored on the trodden worms that crawled beneath,
 And others mournfully within the gloom
 Of their own shadow walked, and called it death;
 And some fled from it as it were a ghost, 60
 Half fainting in the affliction of vain breath:
 But more, with motions which each other crossed,
 Pursued or shunned the shadows the clouds threw,
 Or birds within the noonday aether lost,

34, 35 dawn Bathe *Mrs. Shelley (later edd.)*; dawn, Bathed 1824, 1839. 63 shunned *Boscombe MS.*; spurned 1824, 1839.

Upon that path where flowers never grew,—
 And, weary with vain toil and faint for thirst,
 Heard not the fountains, whose melodious dew 65

Out of their mossy cells forever burst;
 Nor felt the breeze which from the forest told
 Of grassy paths and wood-lawns interspersed 70

With overarching elms and caverns cold,
 And violet banks where sweet dreams brood, but they
 Pursued their serious folly as of old.

And as I gazed, methought that in the way
 The throng grew wilder, as the woods of June 75
 When the south wind shakes the extinguished day,

And a cold glare, intenser than the noon,
 But icy cold, obscured with blinding light
 The sun, as he the stars. Like the young moon—

When on the sunlit limits of the night 80
 Her white shell trembles amid crimson air,
 And whilst the sleeping tempest gathers might—

Doth, as the herald of its coming, bear
 The ghost of its dead mother, whose dim form
 Bends in dark aether from her infant's chair,— 85

So came a chariot on the silent storm
 Of its own rushing splendour, and a Shape
 So sate within, as one whom years deform,

Beneath a dusky hood and double cape,
 Crouching within the shadow of a tomb; 90
 And o'er what seemed the head a cloud-like crape

Was bent, a dun and faint aethereal gloom
 Tempering the light. Upon the chariot-beam
 A Janus-visaged Shadow did assume

The guidance of that wonder-wingèd team; 95
 The shapes which drew it in thick lightnings
 Were lost:—I heard alone on the air's soft stream

The music of their ever-moving wings.
 All the four faces of that Charioteer
 Had their eyes banded; little profit brings 100

Speed in the van and blindness in the rear,
 Nor then avail the beams that quench the sun,—
 Or that with banded eyes could pierce the sphere

70 Of . . . interspersed *Boscombe MS.*; Of grassy paths and wood, lawn-interspersed 1824;
 wood-lawn-interspersed 1839. 84 form] frown 1824. 93 light . . . beam] light upon the
 chariot beam; 1824. 96 it omitted 1824.

Of all that is, has been or will be done ;
 So ill was the car guided—but it passed 105
 With solemn speed majestically on.

The crowd gave way, and I arose aghast,
 Or seemed to rise, so mighty was the trance,
 And saw, like clouds upon the thunder-blast,
 The million with fierce song and maniac dance 110
 Raging around—such seemed the jubilee
 As when to greet some conqueror's advance

Imperial Rome poured forth her living sea
 From senate-house, and forum, and theatre,
 When upon the free 115

Had bound a yoke, which soon they stooped to bear.
 Nor wanted here the just similitude
 Of a triumphal pageant, for where'er

The chariot rolled, a captive multitude
 Was driven ;—all those who had grown old in power 120
 Or misery,—all who had their age subdued

By action or by suffering, and whose hour
 Was drained to its last sand in weal or woe,
 So that the trunk survived both fruit and flower ;—

All those whose fame or infamy must grow 125
 Till the great winter lay the form and name
 Of this green earth with them for ever low ;—

All but the sacred few who could not tame
 Their spirits to the conquerors—but as soon
 As they had touched the world with living flame, 130

Fled back like eagles to their native noon,
 Or those who put aside the diadem
 Of earthly thrones or gems . . .

Were there, of Athens or Jerusalem,
 Were neither mid the mighty captives seen, 135
 Nor mid the ribald crowd that followed them,

Nor those who went before fierce and obscene.
 The wild dance maddens in the van, and those
 Who lead it—fleet as shadows on the green,

Outspeed the chariot, and without repose 140
 Mix with each other in tempestuous measure
 To savage music, wilder as it grows,

They, tortured by their agonizing pleasure,
 Convulsed and on the rapid whirlwinds spun
 Of that fierce Spirit, whose unholy leisure 145

109 thunder *Boscombe MS.* ; thunders 1824 ; thunder's 1839. 112 greet *Boscombe MS.* ;
 meet 1824, 1839. 131-4 See *Editor's Note*.

Was soothed by mischief since the world begun,
 Throw back their heads and loose their streaming hair;
 And in their dance round her who dims the sun,

Maidens and youths fling their wild arms in air
 As their feet twinkle; they recede, and now
 Bending within each other's atmosphere, 150

Kindle invisibly—and as they glow,
 Like moths by light attracted and repelled,
 Off to their bright destruction come and go,

Till like two clouds into one vale impelled, 155
 That shake the mountains when their lightnings mingle
 And die in rain—the fiery band which held

Their natures, snaps—while the shock still may tingle;
 One falls and then another in the path
 Senseless—nor is the desolation single, 160

Yet ere I can say *where*—the chariot hath
 Passed over them—nor other trace I find
 But as of foam after the ocean's wrath

Is spent upon the desert shore;—behind,
 Old men and women foully disarrayed, 165
 Shake their gray hairs in the insulting wind,

And follow in the dance, with limbs decayed,
 Seeking to reach the light which leaves them still
 Farther behind and deeper in the shade.

But not the less with impotence of will 170
 They wheel, though ghastly shadows interpose
 Round them and round each other, and fulfil

Their work, and in the dust from whence they rose
 Sink, and corruption veils them as they lie,
 And past in these performs what in those. 175

Struck to the heart by this sad pageantry,
 Half to myself I said—'And what is this?
 Whose shape is that within the car? And why—'

I would have added—'is all here amiss?—'
 But a voice answered—'Life!'—I turned, and knew 180
 (O Heaven, have mercy on such wretchedness!)

That what I thought was an old root which grew
 To strange distortion out of the hill side,
 Was indeed one of those deluded crew,

And that the grass, which methought hung so wide 185
 And white, was but his thin discoloured hair,
 And that the holes he vainly sought to hide,

158 while *Boscombe MS.*; omitted 1824, 1839. 167 And . . . dance 1839; To seek, to
 {], to strain 1824. 168 Seeking 1839; Limping 1824.

Were or had been eyes:—‘If thou canst, forbear
To join the dance, which I had well forborne!’
Said the grim Feature (of my thought aware).

190

‘I will unfold that which to this deep scorn
Led me and my companions, and relate
The progress of the pageant since the morn;

‘If thirst of knowledge shall not then abate,
Follow it thou even to the night, but I
Am weary.’—Then like one who with the weight

195

Of his own words is staggered, wearily
He paused; and ere he could resume, I cried:
‘First, who art thou?’—‘Before thy memory,

‘I feared, loved, hated, suffered, did and died,
And if the spark with which Heaven lit my spirit
Had been with purer nutriment supplied,

200

‘Corruption would not now thus much inherit
Of what was once Rousseau,—nor this disguise
Stain that which ought to have disdained to wear it;

205

‘If I have been extinguished, yet there rise
A thousand beacons from the spark I bore’—
‘And who are those chained to the car?’—‘The wise,

‘The great, the unforgotten,—they who wore
Mitres and helms and crowns, or wreaths of light,
Signs of thought’s empire over thought—their lore

210

‘Taught them not this, to know themselves; their might
Could not repress the mystery within,
And for the morn of truth they feigned, deep night

‘Caught them ere evening.’—‘Who is he with chin
Upon his breast, and hands crossed on his chain?’—
‘The child of a fierce hour; he sought to win

215

‘The world, and lost all that it did contain
Of greatness, in its hope destroyed; and more
Of fame and peace than virtue’s self can gain

220

‘Without the opportunity which bore
Him on its eagle pinions to the peak
From which a thousand climbers have before

‘Fallen, as Napoleon fell.’—I felt my cheek
Alter, to see the shadow pass away,
Whose grasp had left the giant world so weak

225

That every pigmy kicked it as it lay;
And much I grieved to think how power and will
In opposition rule our mortal day,

190 Feature . . . aware) *Rossetti*, 1870; Feature of my thought: ‘Aware 1824, 1839.
nutriment *Boscombe MS.*; sentiment 1824, 1839. 205 Stain] Stained 1824, 1839.

202

And why God made irreconcilable 230
 Good and the means of good; and for despair
 I half disdained mine eyes' desire to fill
 With the spent vision of the times that were
 And scarce have ceased to be.—'Dost thou behold,'
 Said my guide, 'those spoilers spoiled, Voltaire, 235
 'Frederick, and Paul, Catherine, and Leopold,
 And hoary anarchists, demagogues, and sage—
 names which the world thinks always old,
 'For in the battle Life and they did wage,
 She remained conqueror. I was overcome 240
 By my own heart alone, which neither age,
 'Nor tears, nor infamy, nor now the tomb
 Could temper to its object.'—'Let them pass,'
 I cried, 'the world and its mysterious doom
 'Is not so much more glorious than it was, 245
 That I desire to worship those who drew
 New figures on its false and fragile glass
 'As the old faded.'—'Figures ever new
 Rise on the bubble, paint them as you may;
 We have but thrown, as those before us threw, 250
 'Our shadows on it as it passed away.
 But mark how chained to the triumphal chair
 The mighty phantoms of an elder day;
 'All that is mortal of great Plato there
 Expiates the joy and woe his master knew not; 255
 The star that ruled his doom was far too fair,
 'And life, where long that flower of Heaven grew not,
 Conquered that heart by love, which gold, or pain,
 Or age, or sloth, or slavery could subdue not.
 'And near him walk the 260 twain,
 The tutor and his pupil, whom Dominion
 Followed as tame as vulture in a chain.
 'The world was darkened beneath either pinion
 Of him whom from the flock of conquerors
 Fame singled out for her thunder-bearing minion; 265
 'The other long outlived both woes and wars,
 Throned in the thoughts of men, and still had kept
 The jealous key of Truth's eternal doors,
 'If Bacon's eagle spirit had not leapt
 Like lightning out of darkness—he compelled 270
 The Proteus shape of Nature, as it leapt

235 Said my 1824, 1839; Said then my *cj. Forman.* 238 names which the 1839; name
 the 1824. 252 how] now *cj. Forman.* 260 him 1839; omitted 1824.

- 'To wake, and lead him to the caves that held
The treasure of the secrets of its reign.
See the great bards of elder time, who quelled
- 'The passions which they sung, as by their strain 275
May well be known: their living melody
Tempers its own contagion to the vein
- 'Of those who are infected with it—I
Have suffered what I wrote, or viler pain!
And so my words have seeds of misery— 280
- 'Even as the deeds of others, not as theirs.'
And then he pointed to a company,
- 'Midst whom I quickly recognized the heirs
Of Caesar's crime, from him to Constantine;
The anarch chiefs, whose force and murderous snares 285
Had founded many a sceptre-bearing line,
And spread the plague of gold and blood abroad:
And Gregory and John, and men divine,
Who rose like shadows between man and God;
Till that eclipse, still hanging over heaven, 290
Was worshipped by the world o'er which they strode,
For the true sun it quenched—'Their power was given
But to destroy,' replied the leader:—'I
Am one of those who have created, even
- 'If it be but a world of agony.'— 295
'Whence camest thou? and whither goest thou?
How did thy course begin?' I said, 'and why?
- 'Mine eyes are sick of this perpetual flow
Of people, and my heart sick of one sad thought—
Speak!'—'Whence I am, I partly seem to know, 300
'And how and by what paths I have been brought
To this dread pass, methinks even thou mayst guess;—
Why this should be, my mind can compass not;
- 'Whither the conqueror hurries me, still less;—
But follow thou, and from spectator turn 305
Actor or victim in this wretchedness,
- 'And what thou wouldst be taught I then may learn
From thee. Now listen:—In the April prime,
When all the forest-tips began to burn
- 'With kindling green, touched by the azure clime 310
Of the young season, I was laid asleep
Under a mountain, which from unknown time

280 See Editor's Note. 281, 282 Even . . . then Boscombe MS.; omitted 1824, 1839.
296 camest Boscombe MS.; comest 1824, 1839. 311 season Boscombe MS.; year's dawn
1824, 1839.

'Had yawned into a cavern, high and deep;
 And from it came a gentle rivulet,
 Whose water, like clear air, in its calm sweep 315
 'Bent the soft grass, and kept for ever wet
 The stems of the sweet flowers, and filled the grove
 With sounds, which whoso hears must needs forget
 'All pleasure and all pain, all hate and love,
 Which they had known before that hour of rest; 320
 A sleeping mother then would dream not of
 'Her only child who died upon the breast
 At eventide—a king would mourn no more
 The crown of which his brows were dispossessed
 'When the sun lingered o'er his ocean floor 325
 To gild his rival's new prosperity.
 Thou wouldst forget thus vainly to deplore
 'Ills, which if ills can find no cure from thee,
 The thought of which no other sleep will quell,
 Nor other music blot from memory, 330
 'So sweet and deep is the oblivious spell;
 And whether life had been before that sleep
 The Heaven which I imagine, or a Hell
 'Like this harsh world in which I wake to weep,
 I know not. I arose, and for a space 335
 The scene of woods and waters seemed to keep,
 'Though it was now broad day, a gentle trace
 Of light diviner than the common sun
 Sheds on the common earth, and all the place
 'Was filled with magic sounds woven into one 340
 Oblivious melody, confusing sense
 Amid the gliding waves and shadows dun;
 'And, as I looked, the bright omnipresence
 Of morning through the orient cavern flowed,
 And the sun's image radiantly intense 345
 'Burned on the waters of the well that glowed
 Like gold, and threaded all the forest's maze
 With winding paths of emerald fire; there stood
 'Amid the sun, as he amid the blaze
 Of his own glory, on the vibrating 350
 Floor of the fountain, paved with flashing rays,
 'A Shape all light, which with one hand did fling
 Dew on the earth, as if she were the dawn,
 And the invisible rain did ever sing

- 'A silver music on the mossy lawn ; 355
 And still before me on the dusky grass,
 Iris her many-coloured scarf had drawn :
- 'In her right hand she bore a crystal glass,
 Mantling with bright Nepenthe ; the fierce splendour
 Fell from her as she moved under the mass 360
- 'Of the deep cavern, and with palms so tender,
 Their tread broke not the mirror of its billow,
 Glided along the river, and did bend her
- 'Head under the dark boughs, till like a willow
 Her fair hair swept the bosom of the stream 365
 That whispered with delight to be its pillow.
- 'As one enamoured is upborne in dream
 O'er lily-paven lakes, mid silver mist,
 To wondrous music, so this shape might seem
- 'Partly to tread the waves with feet which kissed 370
 The dancing foam ; partly to glide along
 The air which roughened the moist amethyst,
- 'Or the faint morning beams that fell among
 The trees, or the soft shadows of the trees ;
 And her feet, ever to the ceaseless song 375
- 'Of leaves, and winds, and waves, and birds, and bees,
 And falling drops, moved in a measure new
 Yet sweet, as on the summer evening breeze,
- 'Up from the lake a shape of golden dew
 Between two rocks, athwart the rising moon, 380
 Dances i' the wind, where never eagle flew ;
- 'And still her feet, no less than the sweet tune
 To which they moved, seemed as they moved to blot
 The thoughts of him who gazed on them ; and soon
- 'All that was, seemed as if it had been not ; 385
 And all the gazer's mind was strewn beneath
 Her feet like embers ; and she, thought by thought,
- 'Trampled its sparks into the dust of death ;
 As day upon the threshold of the east
 Treads out the lamps of night, until the breath 390
- 'Of darkness re-illumine even the least
 Of heaven's living eyes—like day she came,
 Making the night a dream ; and ere she ceased
- 'To move, as one between desire and shame
 Suspended, I said—If, as it doth seem, 395
 Thou comest from the realm without a name

361 Of . . . and *Boscombe MS.* ; Out of the deep cavern with 1824, 1839.
Boscombe MS. ; She glided 1824, 1839. 377 in *Boscombe MS.* ; to 1824.

363 Glided

'Into this valley of perpetual dream,
Show whence I came, and where I am, and why—
Pass not away upon the passing stream.

'Arise and quench thy thirst, was her reply. 400
And as a shut lily stricken by the wand
Of dewy morning's vital alchemy,

'I rose; and, bending at her sweet command,
Touched with faint lips the cup she raised,
And suddenly my brain became as sand 405

'Where the first wave had more than half erased
The track of deer on desert Labrador;
Whilst the wolf, from which they fled amazed,

'Leaves his stamp visibly upon the shore,
Until the second bursts;—so on my sight 410
Burst a new vision, never seen before,

'And the fair shape waned in the coming light,
As veil by veil the silent splendour drops
From Lucifer, amid the chrysolite

'Of sunrise, ere it tinge the mountain-tops; 415
And as the presence of that fairest planet,
Although unseen, is felt by one who hopes

'That his day's path may end as he began it,
In that star's smile, whose light is like the scent
Of a jonquil when evening breezes fan it, 420

'Or the soft note in which his dear lament
The Brescian¹ shepherd breathes, or the caress
That turned his weary slumber to content;

'So knew I in that light's severe excess
The presence of that Shape which on the stream 425
Moved, as I moved along the wilderness,

'More dimly than a day-appearing dream,
The ghost of a forgotten form of sleep;
A light of heaven, whose half-extinguished beam

'Through the sick day in which we wake to weep 430
Glimmers, for ever sought, for ever lost;
So did that shape its obscure tenour keep

'Beside my path, as silent as a ghost;
But the new Vision, and the cold bright car,
With solemn speed and stunning music, crossed 435

'The forest, and as if from some dread war
Triumphantly returning, the loud million
Fiercely extolled the fortune of her star.

¹ The favourite song, *Stanco di pascolar le pecorelle*, is a Brescian national air.—[MRS. SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

- 'A moving arch of victory, the vermilion
 And green and azure plumes of Iris had 440
 Built high over her wind-wingèd pavilion,
 'And underneath aethereal glory clad
 The wilderness, and far before her flew
 The tempest of the splendour, which forbade
 'Shadow to fall from leaf and stone; the crew 445
 Seemed in that light, like atomies to dance
 Within a sunbeam;—some upon the new
 'Embroidery of flowers, that did enhance
 The grassy vesture of the desert, played,
 Forgetful of the chariot's swift advance; 450
 'Others stood gazing, till within the shade
 Of the great mountain its light left them dim;
 Others outspeeded it; and others made
 'Circles around it, like the clouds that swim
 Round the high moon in a bright sea of air; 455
 And more did follow, with exulting hymn,
 'The chariot and the captives fettered there:—
 But all like bubbles on an eddy flood
 Fell into the same track at last, and were
 'Borne onward.—I among the multitude 460
 Was swept—me, sweetest flowers delayed not long;
 Me, not the shadow nor the solitude;
 'Me, not that falling stream's Lethean song;
 Me, not the phantom of that early Form
 Which moved upon its motion—but among 465
 'The thickest billows of that living storm
 I plunged, and bared my bosom to the clime
 Of that cold light, whose airs too soon deform.
 'Before the chariot had begun to climb
 The opposing steep of that mysterious dell, 470
 Behold a wonder worthy of the rhyme
 'Of him who from the lowest depths of hell,
 Through every paradise and through all glory,
 Love led serene, and who returned to tell
 'The words of hate and awe; the wondrous story 475
 How all things are transfigured except Love;
 For deaf as is a sea, which wrath makes hoary,
 'The world can hear not the sweet notes that move
 The sphere whose light is melody to lovers—
 A wonder worthy of his rhyme.—The grove 480

'Grew dense with shadows to its inmost covers,
The earth was gray with phantoms, and the air
Was peopled with dim forms, as when there hovers

'A flock of vampire-bats before the glare
Of the tropic sun, bringing, ere evening, 485
Strange night upon some Indian isle;—thus were

'Phantoms diffused around; and some did fling
Shadows of shadows, yet unlike themselves,
Behind them; some like eaglets on the wing

'Were lost in the white day; others like elves 490
Danced in a thousand unimagined shapes
Upon the sunny streams and grassy shelves;

'And others sate chattering like restless apes
On vulgar hands, . . .
Some made a cradle of the ermined capes 495

'Of kingly mantles; some across the tiar
Of pontiffs sate like vultures; others played
Under the crown which girt with empire

'A baby's or an idiot's brow, and made
Their nests in it. The old anatomies 500
Sate hatching their bare broods under the shade

'Of daemon wings, and laughed from their dead eyes
To reassume the delegated power,
Arrayed in which those worms did monarchize,

'Who made this earth their charnel. Others more 505
Humble, like falcons, sate upon the fist
Of common men, and round their heads did soar;

'Or like small gnats and flies, as thick as mist
On evening marshes, thronged about the brow
Of lawyers, statesmen, priest and theorist;— 510

'And others, like discoloured flakes of snow
On fairest bosoms and the sunniest hair,
Fell, and were melted by the youthful glow

'Which they extinguished; and, like tears, they were
A veil to those from whose faint lids they rained 515
In drops of sorrow. I became aware

'Of whence those forms proceeded which thus stained
The track in which we moved. After brief space,
From every form the beauty slowly waned;

'From every firmest limb and fairest face 520
The strength and freshness fell like dust, and left
The action and the shape without the grace

486 isle *Boscombe MS.*; vale 1824.
demons 1824.

497 sate like vultures *Boscombe MS.*; rode like
515 those] eyes *cf. Rossetti.*

'Of life. The marble brow of youth was cleft
With care; and in those eyes where once hope shone,
Desire, like a lioness bereft

525

'Of her last cub, glared ere it died; each one
Of that great crowd sent forth incessantly
These shadows, numerous as the dead leaves blown

'In autumn evening from a poplar tree.
Each like himself and like each other were
At first; but some distorted seemed to be

530

'Obscure clouds, moulded by the casual air;
And of this stuff the car's creative ray
Wrought all the busy phantoms that were there,

'As the sun shapes the clouds; thus on the way
Mask after mask fell from the countenance
And form of all; and long before the day

535

'Was old, the joy which waked like heaven's glance
The sleepers in the oblivious valley, died;
And some grew weary of the ghastly dance,

540

'And fell, as I have fallen, by the wayside;—
Those soonest from whose forms most shadows passed,
And least of strength and beauty did abide.

'Then, what is life? I cried.'—

CANCELLED OPENING OF 'THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE'

[Published by Miss M. Blind, *Westminster Review*, July, 1870.]

Out of the eastern shadow of the Earth,
Amid the clouds upon its margin gray
Scattered by Night to swathe in its bright birth

In gold and fleecy snow the infant Day,
The glorious Sun arose: beneath his light,
The earth and all

5

534 Wrought *Boscombe MS.*; Wrapt 1824.

EARLY POEMS

[1814, 1815]

[The poems which follow appeared, with a few exceptions, either in the volumes published from time to time by Shelley himself, or in the *Posthumous Poems* of 1824, or in the *Poetical Works* of 1839, of which a second and enlarged edition was published by Mrs. Shelley in the same year. A few made their first appearance in some fugitive publication—such as Leigh Hunt's *Literary Pocket-Book*—and were subsequently incorporated in the collective editions. In every case the *editio princeps* and (where this is possible) the exact date of composition are indicated below the title.]

STANZA, WRITTEN AT BRACKNELL

[Composed March, 1814. Published in Hogg's *Life of Shelley*, 1858.]

THY dewy looks sink in my breast ;	I could have borne my wayward lot :
Thy gentle words stir poison there ;	The chains that bind this ruined soul
Thou hast disturbed the only rest	Had cankered then—but crushed it
That was the portion of despair !	not.
Subdued to Duty's hard control,	5

STANZAS.—APRIL, 1814

[Composed at Bracknell, April, 1814. Published with *Alastor*, 1816.]

AWAY! the moor is dark beneath the moon,
 Rapid clouds have drank the last pale beam of even :
 Away! the gathering winds will call the darkness soon,
 And profoundest midnight shroud the serene lights of heaven.

Pause not ! The time is past ! Every voice cries, Away ! 5
 Tempt not with one last tear thy friend's ungentle mood :
 Thy lover's eye, so glazed and cold, dares not entreat thy stay :
 Duty and dereliction guide thee back to solitude.

Away, away! to thy sad and silent home ;
 Pour bitter tears on its desolated hearth ; 10
 Watch the dim shades as like ghosts they go and come,
 And complicate strange webs of melancholy mirth.

The leaves of wasted autumn woods shall float around thine head :
 The blooms of dewy spring shall gleam beneath thy feet :
 But thy soul or this world must fade in the frost that binds the dead, 15
 Ere midnight's frown and morning's smile, ere thou and peace may meet.

The cloud shadows of midnight possess their own repose,
 For the weary winds are silent, or the moon is in the deep :
 Some respite to its turbulence unresting ocean knows ;
 Whatever moves, or toils, or grieves, hath its appointed sleep. 20

Thou in the grave shalt rest—yet till the phantoms flee
 Which that house and heath and garden made dear to thee erewhile,
 Thy remembrance, and repentance, and deep musings are not free
 From the music of two voices and the light of one sweet smile.

Stanzas.—6 tear 1816; glance 1839.

TO HARRIET

[Composed May, 1814. Published (from the Esdaile MSS.) by Dowden,
Life of Shelley, 1887.]

THY look of love has power to calm
The stormiest passion of my soul;
Thy gentle words are drops of balm
In life's too bitter bowl;
No grief is mine, but that alone 5
These choicest blessings I have known.

Harriet! if all who long to live
In the warm sunshine of thine eye,
That price beyond all pain must give,—
Beneath thy scorn to die; 10
Then hear thy chosen own too late
His heart most worthy of thy hate.

Be thou, then, one among mankind
Whose heart is harder not for state,
Thou only virtuous, gentle, kind, 15
Amid a world of hate;

And by a slight endurance seal
A fellow-being's lasting weal.

For pale with anguish is his cheek,
His breath comes fast, his eyes are
dim, 20
Thy name is struggling ere he speak,
Weak is each trembling limb;
In mercy let him not endure
The misery of a fatal cure.

Oh, trust for once no erring guide! 25
Bid the remorseless feeling flee;
'Tis malice, 'tis revenge, 'tis pride,
'Tis anything but thee;
Oh, deign a nobler pride to prove,
And pity if thou canst not love. 30

TO MARY WOLLSTONECRAFT GODWIN

[Composed June, 1814. Published in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I
MINE eyes were dim with tears unshed;
Yes, I was firm—thus wert not
thou;—
My baffled looks did fear yet dread
To meet thy looks—I could not know
How anxiously they sought to shine 5
With soothing pity upon mine.

II
To sit and curb the soul's mute rage
Which preys upon itself alone;
To curse the life which is the cage
Of fettered grief that dares not
groan, 10
Hiding from many a careless eye
The scornèd load of agony.

III
Whilst thou alone, then not regarded,
The thou alone should be,
To spend years thus, and be re-
warded, 15

As thou, sweet love, requited me
When none were near—Oh! I did
wake
From torture for that moment's sake.

IV
Upon my heart thy accents sweet
Of peace and pity fell like dew 20
On flowers half dead;—thy lips did
meet
Mine tremblingly; thy dark eyes
threw
Their soft persuasion on my brain,
Charming away its dream of pain.

V
We are not happy, sweet! our state 25
Is strange and full of doubt and
fear;
More need of words that ills abate;—
Reserve or censure come not near
Our sacred friendship, lest there be
No solace left for thee and me. 30

To Mary.—2 wert 1839; did 1824.
1839; thy 1824.

3 fear 1824, 1839; yearn *cj. Rossetti*.
30 thee] thou 1824, 1839.

VI

Gentle and good and mild thou art, Away from me, or stoop to wear
 Nor can I live if thou appear The mask of scorn, although it be 35
 Aught but thyself, or turn thine heart To hide the love thou feel'st for me.

TO ———

[Published in *Poetical Works*, 1839, 2nd ed. See Editor's Note.]

YET look on me—take not thine eyes away,
 Which feed upon the love within mine own,
 Which is indeed but the reflected ray
 Of thine own beauty from my spirit thrown.
 Yet speak to me—thy voice is as the tone 5
 Of my heart's echo, and I think I hear
 That thou yet lovest me; yet thou alone
 Like one before a mirror, without care
 Of aught but thine own features, imaged there;
 And yet I wear out life in watching thee; 10
 A toil so sweet at times, and thou indeed
 Art kind when I am sick, and pity me.

MUTABILITY

[Published with *Alastor*, 1816.]

WE are as clouds that veil the midnight moon;
 How restlessly they speed, and gleam, and quiver,
 Streaking the darkness radiantly!—yet soon
 Night closes round, and they are lost for ever:
 Or like forgotten lyres, whose dissonant strings 5
 Give various response to each varying blast,
 To whose frail frame no second motion brings
 One mood or modulation like the last.
 We rest.—A dream has power to poison sleep;
 We rise.—One wandering thought pollutes the day; 10
 We feel, conceive or reason, laugh or weep;
 Embrace fond woe, or cast our cares away:
 It is the same!—For, be it joy or sorrow,
 The path of its departure still is free:
 Man's yesterday may ne'er be like his morrow; 15
 Nought may endure but Mutability.

ON DEATH

[For the date of composition see Editor's Note. Published with *Alastor*, 1816.]

THERE IS NO WORK, NOR DEVICE, NOR KNOWLEDGE, NOR WISDOM, IN THE GRAVE, WHITHER
 THOU GOEST.—*Ecclesiastes*.

THE pale, the cold, and the moony smile
 Which the meteor beam of a starless night

32 can I 1839; I can 1824. 36 feel'st 1839; feel 1824.
Mutability.—15 may 1816; can *Lodore*, chap. xlix, 1835 (Mrs. Shelley). 16 Nought
 may endure but 1816; Nor aught endure save *Lodore*, chap. xlix, 1835 (Mrs. Shelley).

Sheds on a lonely and sea-girt isle,
 Ere the dawning of morn's undoubted light,
 Is the flame of life so fickle and wan
 That flits round our steps till their strength is gone.

O man! hold thee on in courage of soul
 Through the stormy shades of thy worldly way,
 And the billows of cloud that around thee roll
 Shall sleep in the light of a wondrous day,
 Where Hell and Heaven shall leave thee free
 To the universe of destiny.

This world is the nurse of all we know,
 This world is the mother of all we feel,
 And the coming of death is a fearful blow
 To a brain unencompassed with nerves of steel;
 When all that we know, or feel, or see,
 Shall pass like an unreal mystery.

The secret things of the grave are there,
 Where all but this frame must surely be,
 Though the fine-wrought eye and the wondrous ear
 No longer will live to hear or to see
 All that is great and all that is strange
 In the boundless realm of unending change.

Who telleth a tale of unspeaking death?
 Who lifteth the veil of what is to come?
 Who painteth the shadows that are beneath
 The wide-winding caves of the peopled tomb?
 Or uniteth the hopes of what shall be
 With the fears and the love for that which we see?

A SUMMER EVENING CHURCHYARD

LECHLADE, GLOUCESTERSHIRE

[Composed September, 1815. Published with *Alastor*, 1816.]

THE wind has swept from the wide atmosphere
 Each vapour that obscured the sunset's ray;
 And pallid Evening twines its beaming hair
 In duskier braids around the languid eyes of Day:
 Silence and Twilight, unbeloved of men,
 Creep hand in hand from yon obscurest glen.

They breathe their spells towards the departing day,
 Encompassing the earth, air, stars, and sea;
 Light, sound, and motion own the potent sway,
 Responding to the charm with its own mystery.
 The winds are still, or the dry church-tower grass
 Knows not their gentle motions as they pass.

Thou too, æreal Pile ! whose pinnacles
 Point from one shrine like pyramids of fire,
 Obeyest in silence their sweet solemn spells, 15
 Clothing in hues of heaven thy dim and distant spire,
 Around whose lessening and invisible height
 Gather among the stars the clouds of night.

The dead are sleeping in their sepulchres :
 And, mouldering as they sleep, a thrilling sound, 20
 Half sense, half thought, among the darkness stirs,
 Breathed from their wormy beds all living things around,
 And mingling with the still night and mute sky
 Its awful hush is felt inaudibly.

Thus solemnized and softened, death is mild 25
 And terrorless as this serenest night :
 Here could I hope, like some inquiring child
 Sporting on graves, that death did hide from human sight
 Sweet secrets, or beside its breathless sleep
 That loveliest dreams perpetual watch did keep. 30

TO ———

[Published with *Alastor*, 1816. See Editor's Note.]

ΔΑΚΡΥΣΙ ΔΙΟΙΣΩ ΠΟΤΜΟΝ ἈΠΟΤΜΟΝ.

OH ! there are spirits of the air,
 And genii of the evening breeze,
 And gentle ghosts, with eyes as fair
 As star-beams among twilight trees :—
 Such lovely ministers to meet 5
 Oft hast thou turned from men thy lonely feet.

With mountain winds, and babbling springs,
 And moonlight seas, that are the voice
 Of these inexplicable things,
 Thou didst hold commune, and rejoice 10
 When they did answer thee ; but they
 Cast, like a worthless boon, thy love away.

And thou hast sought in starry eyes
 Beams that were never meant for thine,
 Another's wealth :—tame sacrifice 15
 To a fond faith ! still dost thou pine ?
 Still dost thou hope that greeting hands,
 Voice, looks, or lips, may answer thy demands ?

Ah ! wherefore didst thou build thine hope
 On the false earth's inconstancy ? 20
 Did thine own mind afford no scope
 Of love, or moving thoughts to thee ?

That natural scenes or human smiles
 Could steal the power to wind thee in their wiles?

Yes, all the faithless smiles are fled
 Whose falsehood left thee broken-hearted;
 The glory of the moon is dead;
 Night's ghosts and dreams have now departed;
 Thine own soul still is true to thee,
 But changed to a foul fiend through misery.

This fiend, whose ghastly presence ever
 Beside thee like thy shadow hangs,
 Dream not to chase;—the mad endeavour
 Would scourge thee to severer pangs.
 Be as thou art. Thy settled fate,
 Dark as it is, all change would aggravate.

TO WORDSWORTH

[Published with *Alastor*, 1816.]

POET of Nature, thou hast wept to know
 That things depart which never may return:
 Childhood and youth, friendship and love's first glow,
 Have fled like sweet dreams, leaving thee to mourn.
 These common woes I feel. One loss is mine
 Which thou too feel'st, yet I alone deplore.
 Thou wert as a lone star, whose light did shine
 On some frail bark in winter's midnight roar:
 Thou hast like to a rock-built refuge stood
 Above the blind and battling multitude:
 In honoured poverty thy voice did weave
 Songs consecrate to truth and liberty,—
 Deserting these, thou leavest me to grieve,
 Thus having been, that thou shouldst cease to be.

FEELINGS OF A REPUBLICAN ON THE FALL OF BONAPARTE

[Published with *Alastor*, 1816.]

I HATED thee, fallen tyrant! I did groan
 To think that a most unambitious slave,
 Like thou, shouldst dance and revel on the grave
 Of Liberty. Thou mightst have built thy throne
 Where it had stood even now: thou didst prefer
 A frail and bloody pomp which Time has swept
 In fragments towards Oblivion. Massacre,
 For this I prayed, would on thy sleep have crept,
 Treason and Slavery, Rapine, Fear, and Lust,

And stifled thee, their minister. I know
 Too late, since thou and France are in the dust,
 That Virtue owns a more eternal foe
 Than Force or Fraud: old Custom, legal Crime,
 And bloody Faith the foulest birth of Time.

LINES

[Published in Hunt's *Literary Pocket-Book*, 1823, where it is headed *November*, 1815. Reprinted in the *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. See Editor's Note.]

I

THE cold earth slept below,
 Above the cold sky shone;
 And all around, with a chilling sound,
 From caves of ice and fields of snow,
 The breath of night like death did
 flow 5
 Beneath the sinking moon.

II

The wintry hedge was black,
 The green grass was not seen,
 The birds did rest on the bare thorn's
 breast,
 Whose roots, beside the pathway
 track, 10
 Had bound their folds o'er many a
 crack
 Which the frost had made between.

III

Thine eyes glowed in the glare
 Of the moon's dying light;
 As a fen-fire's beam on a sluggish
 stream 15
 Gleams dimly, so the moon shone
 there,
 And it yellowed the strings of thy
 raven hair,
 That shook in the wind of night.

IV

The moon made thy lips pale, be-
 loved—
 The wind made thy bosom chill—
 The night did shed on thy dear head 21
 Its frozen dew, and thou didst lie
 Where the bitter breath of the naked
 sky
 Might visit thee at will.

NOTE ON THE EARLY POEMS, BY MRS. SHELLEY

THE remainder of Shelley's Poems will be arranged in the order in which they were written. Of course, mistakes will occur in placing some of the shorter ones; for, as I have said, many of these were thrown aside, and I never saw them till I had the misery of looking over his writings after the hand that traced them was dust; and some were in the hands of others, and I never saw them till now. The subjects of the poems are often to me an unerring guide; but on other occasions I can only guess, by finding them in the pages of the same manuscript book that contains poems with the date of whose composition I am fully conversant. In the present arrangement all his poetical translations will be placed together at the end.

The loss of his early papers prevents my being able to give any of the poetry of his boyhood. Of the few I give as *Early Poems*, the greater part were published with *Alastor*; some of them were written previously, some at the same period. The poem beginning 'Oh, there are spirits in the air' was addressed in idea to Coleridge, whom he never knew; and at whose character he could only guess imperfectly, through his writings, and accounts he heard of him from some who

knew him well. He regarded his change of opinions as rather an act of will than conviction, and believed that in his inner heart he would be haunted by what Shelley considered the better and holier aspirations of his youth. The summer evening that suggested to him the poem written in the churchyard of Lechlade occurred during his voyage up the Thames in 1815. He had been advised by a physician to live as much as possible in the open air; and a fortnight of a bright warm July was spent in tracing the Thames to its source. He never spent a season more tranquilly than the summer of 1815. He had just recovered from a severe pulmonary attack; the weather was warm and pleasant. He lived near Windsor Forest; and his life was spent under its shades or on the water, meditating subjects for verse. Hitherto, he had chiefly aimed at extending his political doctrines, and attempted so to do by appeals in prose essays to the people, exhorting them to claim their rights; but he had now begun to feel that the time for action was not ripe in England, and that the pen was the only instrument wherewith to prepare the way for better things.

In the scanty journals kept during those years I find a record of the books that Shelley read during several years. During the years of 1814 and 1815 the list is extensive. It includes, in Greek, Homer, Hesiod, Theocritus, the histories of Thucydides and Herodotus, and Diogenes Laertius. In Latin, Petronius, Suetonius, some of the works of Cicero, a large proportion of those of Seneca and Livy. In English, Milton's poems, Wordsworth's *Excursion*, Southey's *Madoc* and *Thalaba*, Locke *On the Human Understanding*, Bacon's *Novum Organum*. In Italian, Ariosto, Tasso, and Alfieri. In French, the *Réveries d'un Solitaire* of Rousseau. To these may be added several modern books of travels. He read few novels.

POEMS WRITTEN IN 1816

THE SUNSET

[Written at Bishopsgate, 1816 (spring). Published in full in the *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. Lines 9-20, and 28-42, appeared in Hunt's *Literary Pocket-Book*, 1823, under the titles, respectively, of *Sunset*. *From an Unpublished Poem*, and *Grief*. *A Fragment*.]

THERE late was One within whose subtle being,
 As light and wind within some delicate cloud
 That fades amid the blue noon's burning sky,
 Genius and death contended. None may know
 The sweetness of the joy which made his breath
 Fail, like the trances of the summer air,
 When, with the Lady of his love, who then
 First knew the unreserve of mingled being,
 He walked along the pathway of a field
 Which to the east a hoar wood shadowed o'er,
 But to the west was open to the sky.
 There now the sun had sunk, but lines of gold
 Hung on the ashen clouds, and on the points
 Of the far level grass and nodding flowers

4 death 1839; youth 1824.

5

10

And the old dandelion's hoary beard, 15
 And, mingled with the shades of twilight, lay
 On the brown massy woods—and in the east
 The broad and burning moon lingeringly rose
 Between the black trunks of the crowded trees,
 While the faint stars were gathering overhead.— 20
 'Is it not strange, Isabel,' said the youth,
 'I never saw the sun? We will walk here
 To-morrow; thou shalt look on it with me.'

That night the youth and lady mingled lay
 In love and sleep—but when the morning came 25
 The lady found her lover dead and cold,
 Let none believe that God in mercy gave
 That stroke. The lady died not, nor grew wild,
 But year by year lived on—in truth I think
 Her gentleness and patience and sad smiles, 30
 And that she did not die, but lived to tend
 Her aged father, were a kind of madness,
 If madness 'tis to be unlike the world.
 For but to see her were to read the tale
 Woven by some subtlest bard, to make hard hearts 35
 Dissolve away in wisdom-working grief;—
 Her eyes were black and lustreless and wan:
 Her eyelashes were worn away with tears,
 Her lips and cheeks were like things dead—so pale;
 Her hands were thin, and through their wandering veins 40
 And weak articulations might be seen
 Day's ruddy light. The tomb of thy dead self
 Which one vexed ghost inhabits, night and day,
 Is all, lost child, that now remains of thee!

'Inheritor of more than earth can give, 45
 Passionless calm and silence unreprieved,
 Whether the dead find, oh, not sleep! but rest,
 And are the uncomplaining things they seem,
 Or live, or drop in the deep sea of Love;
 Oh, that like thine, mine epitaph were—Peace!' 50
 This was the only moan she ever made.

HYMN TO INTELLECTUAL BEAUTY

[Composed, probably, in Switzerland, in the summer of 1816. Published in
 Hunt's *Examiner*, January 19, 1817, and with *Rosalind and Helen*, 1819.]

I

THE awful shadow of some unseen Power
 Floats though unseen among us,—visiting
 This various world with as inconstant wing

22 sun? We will walk 1824; sunrise? We will wake *cj. Forman.* 37 Her eyes . . . wan
 Hunt, 1823; omitted 1824, 1839. 38 worn 1824; torn 1839. 2 among 1819; amongst 1817.

As summer winds that creep from flower to flower,—
 Like moonbeams that behind some piny mountain shower, 5
 It visits with inconstant glance
 Each human heart and countenance;
 Like hues and harmonies of evening,—
 Like clouds in starlight widely spread,—
 Like memory of music fled,— 10
 Like aught that for its grace may be
 Dear, and yet dearer for its mystery.

II

Spirit of BEAUTY, that dost consecrate
 With thine own hues all thou dost shine upon
 Of human thought or form,—where art thou gone? 15
 Why dost thou pass away and leave our state,
 This dim vast vale of tears, vacant and desolate?
 Ask why the sunlight not for ever
 Weaves rainbows o'er yon mountain-river,
 Why aught should fail and fade that once is shown, 20
 Why fear and dream and death and birth
 Cast on the daylight of this earth
 Such gloom,—why man has such a scope
 For love and hate, despondency and hope?

III

No voice from some sublimer world hath ever 25
 To sage or poet these responses given—
 Therefore the names of Demon, Ghost, and Heaven,
 Remain the records of their vain endeavour,
 Frail spells—whose uttered charm might not avail to sever,
 From all we hear and all we see, 30
 Doubt, chance, and mutability.
 Thy light alone—like mist o'er mountains driven,
 Or music by the night-wind sent
 Through strings of some still instrument,
 Or moonlight on a midnight stream, 35
 Gives grace and truth to life's unquiet dream.

IV

Love, Hope, and Self-esteem, like clouds depart
 And come, for some uncertain moments lent.
 Man were immortal, and omnipotent,
 Didst thou, unknown and awful as thou art, 40
 Keep with thy glorious train firm state within his heart.
 Thou messenger of sympathies,
 That wax and wane in lovers' eyes—
 Thou—that to human thought art nourishment,

14 dost 1819; doth 1817.
 37-48 omitted Boscombe MS.

21 fear and dream 1819; care and pain Boscombe MS.
 44 art 1817; are 1819.

Like darkness to a dying flame!
 Depart not as thy shadow came,
 Depart not—lest the grave should be,
 Like life and fear, a dark reality.

V

While yet a boy I sought for ghosts, and sped
 Through many a listening chamber, cave and ruin,
 And starlight wood, with fearful steps pursuing
 Hopes of high talk with the departed dead.
 I called on poisonous names with which our youth is fed;
 I was not heard—I saw them not—
 When musing deeply on the lot
 Of life, at that sweet time when winds are wooing
 All vital things that wake to bring
 News of birds and blossoming,—
 Sudden, thy shadow fell on me;
 I shrieked, and clasped my hands in ecstasy!

VI

I vowed that I would dedicate my powers
 To thee and thine—have I not kept the vow?
 With beating heart and streaming eyes, even now
 I call the phantoms of a thousand hours
 Each from his voiceless grave: they have in visioned bowers
 Of studious zeal or love's delight
 Outwatched with me the envious night—
 They know that never joy illumed my brow
 Unlinked with hope that thou wouldst free
 This world from its dark slavery,
 That thou—O awful LOVELINESS,
 Wouldst give whate'er these words cannot express.

VII

The day becomes more solemn and serene
 When noon is past—there is a harmony
 In autumn, and a lustre in its sky,
 Which through the summer is not heard or seen,
 As if it could not be, as if it had not been!
 Thus let thy power, which like the truth
 Of nature on my passive youth
 Descended, to my onward life supply
 Its calm—to one who worships thee,
 And every form containing thee,
 Whom, SPIRIT fair, thy spells did bind
 To fear himself, and love all human kind.

MONT BLANC

LINES WRITTEN IN THE VALE OF CHAMOUNI

[Composed in Switzerland, July, 1816 (see date below). Printed at the end of the *History of a Six Weeks' Tour* published by Shelley in 1817, and reprinted with *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. Amongst the Boscombe MSS. is a draft of this Ode, mainly in pencil, which has been collated by Dr. Garnett.]

I

THE everlasting universe of things
 Flows through the mind, and rolls its rapid waves,
 Now dark—now glittering—now reflecting gloom—
 Now lending splendour, where from secret springs
 The source of human thought its tribute brings 5
 Of waters,—with a sound but half its own,
 Such as a feeble brook will oft assume
 In the wild woods, among the mountains lone,
 Where waterfalls around it leap for ever,
 Where woods and winds contend, and a vast river 10
 Over its rocks ceaselessly bursts and raves.

II

Thus thou, Ravine of Arve—dark, deep Ravine—
 Thou many-coloured, many-voicèd vale,
 Over whose pines, and crags, and caverns sail 15
 Fast cloud-shadows and sunbeams: awful scene,
 Where Power in likeness of the Arve comes down
 From the ice-gulfs that gird his secret throne,
 Bursting through these dark mountains like the flame
 Of lightning through the tempest;—thou dost lie,
 Thy giant brood of pines around thee clinging, 20
 Children of elder time, in whose devotion
 The chainless winds still come and ever came
 To drink their odours, and their mighty swinging
 To hear—an old and solemn harmony;
 Thine earthly rainbows stretched across the sweep 25
 Of the aethereal waterfall, whose veil
 Robes some unsculptured image; the strange sleep
 Which when the voices of the desert fail
 Wraps all in its own deep eternity;—
 Thy caverns echoing to the Arve's commotion, 30
 A loud, lone sound no other sound can tame;
 Thou art pervaded with that ceaseless motion,
 Thou art the path of that unresting sound—
 Dizzy Ravine! and when I gaze on thee
 I seem as in a trance sublime and strange 35
 To muse on my own separate fantasy,
 My own, my human mind, which passively
 Now renders and receives fast influencings,

15 cloud-shadows] cloud shadows 1817; cloud, shadows 1824; clouds, shadows 1839. 20 Thy 1824; The 1839.

Holding an unremitting interchange
 With the clear universe of things around ; 40
 One legion of wild thoughts, whose wandering wings
 Now float above thy darkness, and now rest
 Where that or thou art no unbidden guest,
 In the still cave of the witch Poesy,
 Seeking among the shadows that pass by 45
 Ghosts of all things that are, some shade of thee,
 Some phantom, some faint image ; till the breast
 From which they fled recalls them, thou art there !

III

Some say that gleams of a remoter world
 Visit the soul in sleep,—that death is slumber, 50
 And that its shapes the busy thoughts outnumber
 Of those who wake and live.—I look on high ;
 Has some unknown omnipotence unfurled
 The veil of life and death ? or do I lie
 In dream, and does the mightier world of sleep 55
 Spread far around and inaccessibly
 Its circles ? For the very spirit fails,
 Driven like a homeless cloud from steep to steep
 That vanishes among the viewless gales !
 Far, far above, piercing the infinite sky, 60
 Mont Blanc appears,—still, snowy, and serene—
 Its subject mountains their unearthly forms
 Pile around it, ice and rock ; broad vales between
 Of frozen floods, unfathomable deeps,
 Blue as the overhanging heaven, that spread 65
 And wind among the accumulated steeps ;
 A desert peopled by the storms alone,
 Save when the eagle brings some hunter's bone,
 And the wolf tracks her there—how hideously
 Its shapes are heaped around ! rude, bare, and high, 70
 Ghastly, and scarred, and riven.—Is this the scene
 Where the old Earthquake-dæmon taught her young
 Ruin ? Were these their toys ? or did a sea
 Of fire envelop once this silent snow ?
 None can reply—all seems eternal now. 75
 The wilderness has a mysterious tongue
 Which teaches awful doubt, or faith so mild,
 So solemn, so serene, that man may be,
 But for such faith, with nature reconciled ;
 Thou hast a voice, great Mountain, to repeal 80
 Large codes of fraud and woe ; not understood
 By all, but which the wise, and great, and good
 Interpret, or make felt, or deeply feel.

53 unfurled] upfurled *cf.* James Thomson ('B.V.').
 69 tracks her there 1824; watches her Boscombe MS.
 Boscombe MS.

56 Spread 1824; Speed 1839.
 79 But for such 1824; In such a

IV

The fields, the lakes, the forests, and the streams,
 Ocean, and all the living things that dwell 85
 Within the daedal earth; lightning, and rain,
 Earthquake, and fiery flood, and hurricane,
 The torpor of the year when feeble dreams
 Visit the hidden buds, or dreamless sleep
 Holds every future leaf and flower;—the bound 90
 With which from that detested trance they leap;
 The works and ways of man, their death and birth,
 And that of him and all that his may be;
 All things that move and breathe with toil and sound
 Are born and die; revolve, subside, and swell. 95
 Power dwells apart in its tranquillity,
 Remote, serene, and inaccessible:
 And *this*, the naked countenance of earth,
 On which I gaze, even these primaeval mountains
 Teach the adverting mind. The glaciers creep 100
 Like snakes that watch their prey, from their far fountains,
 Slow rolling on; there, many a precipice,
 Frost and the Sun in scorn of mortal power
 Have piled: dome, pyramid, and pinnacle,
 A city of death, distinct with many a tower 105
 And wall impregnable of beaming ice.
 Yet not a city, but a flood of ruin
 Is there, that from the boundaries of the sky
 Rolls its perpetual stream; vast pines are strewing
 Its destined path, or in the mangled soil 110
 Branchless and shattered stand; the rocks, drawn down
 From yon remotest waste, have overthrown
 The limits of the dead and living world,
 Never to be reclaimed. The dwelling-place
 Of insects, beasts, and birds, becomes its spoil 115
 Their food and their retreat for ever gone,
 So much of life and joy is lost. The race
 Of man flies far in dread; his work and dwelling
 Vanish, like smoke before the tempest's stream,
 And their place is not known. Below, vast caves 120
 Shine in the rushing torrents' restless gleam,
 Which from those secret chasms in tumult welling
 Meet in the vale, and one majestic River,
 The breath and blood of distant lands, for ever
 Rolls its loud waters to the ocean-waves, 125
 Breathes its swift vapours to the circling air.

V

Mont Blanc yet gleams on high:—the power is there,
 The still and solemn power of many sights,

108 boundaries of the sky] boundary of the skies *cf.* Rossetti (*cf.* ll. 102, 106). 121 torrents']
 torrent's 1817, 1824, 1839.

And many sounds, and much of life and death.
 In the calm darkness of the moonless nights, 130
 In the lone glare of day, the snows descend
 Upon that Mountain; none beholds them there,
 Nor when the flakes burn in the sinking sun,
 Or the star-beams dart through them:—Winds contend
 Silently there, and heap the snow with breath 135
 Rapid and strong, but silently! Its home
 The voiceless lightning in these solitudes
 Keeps innocently, and like vapour broods
 Over the snow. The secret Strength of things
 Which governs thought, and to the infinite dome 140
 Of Heaven is as a law, inhabits thee!
 And what were thou, and earth, and stars, and sea,
 If to the human mind's imaginings
 Silence and solitude were vacancy?

July 23, 1816.

CANCELLED PASSAGE OF MONT BLANC

[Published by Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

THERE is a voice, not understood by all,
 Sent from these desert-caves. It is the roar
 Of the rent ice-cliff which the sunbeams call,
 Plunging into the vale—it is the blast
 Descending on the pines—the torrents pour. . . . 5

FRAGMENT: HOME

[Published by Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

DEAR home, thou scene of earliest hopes and joys,
 The least of which wronged Memory ever makes
 Bitterer than all thine unremembered tears.

FRAGMENT OF A GHOST STORY

[Published by Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

A SHOVEL of his ashes took
 From the hearth's obscurest nook,
 Muttering mysteries as she went.
 Helen and Henry knew that Granny
 Was as much afraid of Ghosts as any, 5
 And so they followed hard—
 But Helen clung to her brother's arm,
 And her own spasm made her shake.

NOTE ON POEMS OF 1816, BY MRS. SHELLEY

SHELLEY wrote little during this year. The poem entitled *The Sunset* was written in the spring of the year, while still residing at Bishopsgate. He spent the summer on the shores of the Lake of Geneva. The *Hymn to Intellectual Beauty*

was conceived during his voyage round the lake with Lord Byron. He occupied himself during this voyage by reading the *Nouvelle Héloïse* for the first time. The reading it on the very spot where the scenes are laid added to the interest; and he was at once surprised and charmed by the passionate eloquence and earnest enthralling interest that pervade this work. There was something in the character of Saint-Preux, in his abnegation of self, and in the worship he paid to Love, that coincided with Shelley's own disposition; and, though differing in many of the views and shocked by others, yet the effect of the whole was fascinating and delightful.

Mont Blanc was inspired by a view of that mountain and its surrounding peaks and valleys, as he lingered on the Bridge of Arve on his way through the Valley of Chamouni. Shelley makes the following mention of this poem in his publication of the *History of a Six Weeks' Tour, and Letters from Switzerland*: 'The poem entitled *Mont Blanc* is written by the author of the two letters from Chamouni and Vevai. It was composed under the immediate impression of the deep and powerful feelings excited by the objects which it attempts to describe; and, as an undisciplined overflowing of the soul, rests its claim to approbation on an attempt to imitate the untamable wildness and inaccessible solemnity from which those feelings sprang.'

This was an eventful year, and less time was given to study than usual. In the list of his reading I find, in Greek, Theocritus, the *Prometheus* of Aeschylus, several of Plutarch's *Lives*, and the works of Lucian. In Latin, Lucretius, Pliny's *Letters*, the *Annals* and *Germany* of Tacitus. In French, the *History of the French Revolution* by Lacretelle. He read for the first time, this year, Montaigne's *Essays*, and regarded them ever after as one of the most delightful and instructive books in the world. The list is scanty in English works: Locke's *Essay*, *Political Justice*, and Coleridge's *Lay Sermon*, form nearly the whole. It was his frequent habit to read aloud to me in the evening; in this way we read, this year, the New Testament, *Paradise Lost*, Spenser's *Faery Queen*, and *Don Quixote*.

POEMS WRITTEN IN 1817

MARIANNE'S DREAM

[Composed at Marlow, 1817. Published in Hunt's *Literary Pocket-Book*, 1819, and reprinted in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

A PALE Dream came to a Lady fair,
And said, A boon, a boon, I pray!
I know the secrets of the air,

And things are lost in the glare of day,
Which I can make the sleeping see, 5
If they will put their trust in me.

II

And thou shalt know of things unknown,
If thou wilt let me rest between

The veiny lids, whose fringe is thrown
Over thine eyes so dark and sheen: 10
And half in hope, and half in fright,
The Lady closed her eyes so bright.

III

At first all deadly shapes were driven
Tumultuously across her sleep,
And o'er the vast cope of bending
heaven 15
All ghastly-visaged clouds did sweep;
And the Lady ever looked to spy
If the golden sun shone forth on high.

18 golden 1819; gold 1824, 1839.

IV

And as towards the east she turned,
 She saw aloft in the morning air, ²⁰
 Which now with hues of sunrise
 burned,
 A great black Anchor rising there;
 And wherever the Lady turned her
 eyes,
 It hung before her in the skies.

V

The sky was blue as the summer sea,
 The depths were cloudless over-
 head, ²⁶
 The air was calm as it could be,
 There was no sight or sound of dread,
 But that black Anchor floating still
 Over the piny eastern hill. ³⁰

VI

The Lady grew sick with a weight of
 fear
 To see that Anchor ever hanging,
 And veiled her eyes; she then did hear
 The sound as of a dim low clanging,
 And looked abroad if she might
 know ³⁵
 Was it aught else, or but the flow
 Of the blood in her own veins, to and
 fro.

VII

There was a mist in the sunless air,
 Which shook as it were with an earth-
 quake's shock,
 But the very weeds that blossomed
 there ⁴⁰
 Were moveless, and each mighty
 rock
 Stood on its basis steadfastly;
 The Anchor was seen no more on high.

VIII

But piled around, with summits hid
 In lines of cloud at intervals, ⁴⁵
 Stood many a mountain pyramid
 Among whose everlasting walls
 Two mighty cities shone, and ever
 Through the red mist their domes did
 quiver.

28 or 1824; nor 1839.

IX

On two dread mountains, from whose
 crest, ⁵⁰
 Might seem, the eagle, for her brood,
 Would ne'er have hung her dizzy nest,
 Those tower-encircled cities stood.
 A vision strange such towers to see,
 Sculptured and wrought so gor-
 geously, ⁵⁵
 Where human art could never be.

X

And columns framed of marble white,
 And giant fanes, dome over dome
 Piled, and triumphant gates, all bright
 With workmanship, which could not
 come ⁶⁰
 From touch of mortal instrument,
 Shot o'er the vales, or lustre lent
 From its own shapes magnificent.

XI

But still the Lady heard that clang
 Filling the wide air far away; ⁶⁵
 And still the mist whose light did hang
 Among the mountains shook away,
 So that the Lady's heart beat fast,
 As half in joy, and half aghast,
 On those high domes her look she
 cast. ⁷⁰

XII

Sudden, from out that city sprung
 A light that made the earth grow red;
 Two flames that each with quivering
 tongue
 Licked its high domes, and overhead
 Among those mighty towers and
 fanes ⁷⁵
 Dropped fire, as a volcano rains
 Its sulphurous ruin on the plains.

XIII

And hark! a rush as if the deep
 Had burst its bonds; she looked
 behind
 And saw over the western steep ⁸⁰
 A raging flood descend, and wind
 Through that wide vale; she felt no
 fear,

62 or] a *cj. Rossetti.*

63 its] their *cj. Rossetti.*

But said within herself, 'Tis clear
These towers are Nature's own, and
she
To save them has sent forth the sea.

XIV

And now those raging billows came 86
Where that fair Lady sate, and she
Was borne towards the showering flame
By the wild waves heaped tumult-
uously,
And, on a little plank, the flow 90
Of the whirlpool bore her to and fro.

XV

The flames were fiercely vomited
From every tower and every dome,
And dreary light did widely shed
O'er that vast flood's suspended
foam, 95
Beneath the smoke which hung its
night
On the stained cope of heaven's light.

XVI

The plank whereon that Lady sate
Was driven through the chasms,
about and about,
Between the peaks so desolate 100
Of the drowning mountains, in and
out,
As the thistle-beard on a whirlwind
sails—
While the flood was filling those hollow
vales.

XVII

At last her plank an eddy crossed,
And bore her to the city's wall, 105
Which now the flood had reached
almost;
It might the stoutest heart appal
To hear the fire roar and hiss
Through the domes of those mighty
palaces. 109

XVIII

The eddy whirled her round and round
Before a gorgeous gate, which stood

92 flames *cf. Rossetti*; waves 1819, 1824, 1839.
1839. 106 flood] flames *cf. James Thomson* ('B.V.').

135 mountains 1819; mountain 1824, 1839.

Piercing the clouds of smoke which
bound
Its æry arch with light like blood;
She looked on that gate of marble
clear,
With wonder that extinguished fear.

XIX

For it was filled with sculptures
rarest, 116
Of forms most beautiful and strange,
Like nothing human, but the fairest
Of winged shapes, whose legions
range
Throughout the sleep of those that
are, 120
Like this same Lady, good and fair.

XX

And as she looked, still lovelier grew
Those marble forms;—the sculptor
sure
Was a strong spirit, and the hue
Of his own mind did there endure
After the touch, whose power had
braided 126
Such grace, was in some sad change
faded.

XXI

She looked, the flames were dim, the
flood
Grew tranquil as a woodland river
Winding through hills in solitude; 130
Those marble shapes then seemed to
quiver,
And their fair limbs to float in motion,
Like weeds unfolding in the ocean.

XXII

And their lips moved; one seemed to
speak,
When suddenly the mountains
cracked, 135
And through the chasm the flood did
break
With an earth-uplifting cataract:
The statues gave a joyous scream,

101 mountains 1819; mountain 1824.

120 that 1819, 1824; who 1839.

And on its wings the pale thin Dream
Lifted the Lady from the stream. 140

XXIII

The dizzy flight of that phantom pale
Waked the fair Lady from her sleep,

And she arose, while from the veil
Of her dark eyes the Dream did creep,
And she walked about as one who
knew 145
That sleep has sights as clear and true
As any waking eyes can view.

TO CONSTANTIA, SINGING

[Published by Mrs. Shelley in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. Amongst the Shelley MSS. at the Bodleian is a chaotic first draft, from which Mr. Locock [*Examination*, &c., 1903, pp. 60-62] has, with patient ingenuity, disengaged a first and a second stanza consistent with the metrical scheme of stanzas iii and iv. The two stanzas thus recovered are printed here immediately below the poem as edited by Mrs. Shelley. It need hardly be added that Mr. Locock's restored version cannot, any more than Mrs. Shelley's obviously imperfect one, be regarded in the light of a final recension.]

I

THUS to be lost and thus to sink and die,
Perchance were death indeed!—Constantia, turn!
In thy dark eyes a power like light doth lie,
Even though the sounds which were thy voice, which burn
Between thy lips, are laid to sleep; 5
Within thy breath, and on thy hair, like odour, it is yet,
And from thy touch like fire doth leap.
Even while I write, my burning cheeks are wet,
Alas, that the torn heart can bleed, but not forget!

II

A breathless awe, like the swift change 10
Unseen, but felt in youthful slumbers,
Wild, sweet, but uncommunicably strange,
Thou breathest now in fast ascending numbers.
The cope of heaven seems rent and cloven
By the enchantment of thy strain, 15
And on my shoulders wings are woven,
To follow its sublime career
Beyond the mighty moons that wane
Upon the verge of Nature's utmost sphere,
Till the world's shadowy walls are past and disappear. 20

III

Her voice is hovering o'er my soul—it lingers
O'ershadowing it with soft and lulling wings,
The blood and life within those snowy fingers
Teach witchcraft to the instrumental strings.
My brain is wild, my breath comes quick— 25
The blood is listening in my frame,
And thronging shadows, fast and thick,
Fall on my overflowing eyes;

My heart is quivering like a flame;
 As morning dew, that in the sunbeam dies,
 I am dissolved in these consuming ecstasies.

IV

I have no life, Constantia, now, but thee,
 Whilst, like the world-surrounding air, thy song
 Flows on, and fills all things with melody.—
 Now is thy voice a tempest swift and strong,
 On which, like one in trance upborne,
 Secure o'er rocks and waves I sweep,
 Rejoicing like a cloud of morn.
 Now 'tis the breath of summer night,
 Which when the starry waters sleep,
 Round western isles, with incense-blossoms bright,
 Lingering, suspends my soul in its voluptuous flight.

STANZAS I AND II

As restored by Mr. C. D. Locock

I

Cease, cease—for such wild lessons madmen learn
 Thus to be lost, and thus to sink and die
 Perchance were death indeed!—Constantia turn
 In thy dark eyes a power like light doth lie
 Even though the sounds its voice that were
 Between [thy] lips are laid to sleep:
 Within thy breath, and on thy hair
 Like odour, it is [lingering] yet
 And from thy touch like fire doth leap—
 Even while I write, my burning cheeks are wet—
 Alas, that the torn heart can bleed but not forget.

II

[A deep and] breathless awe like the swift change
 Of dreams unseen but felt in youthful slumbers
 Wild sweet yet incommunicably strange
 Thou breathest now in fast ascending numbers . . .

TO CONSTANTIA

[Dated 1817 by Mrs. Shelley, and printed by her in the *Poetical Works*, 1839, 1st edition. A copy exists amongst the Shelley MSS. at the Bodleian. See Mr. C. D. Locock's *Examination*, &c., 1903, p. 46.]

I

THE rose that drinks the fountain dew
 In the pleasant air of noon,
 Grows pale and blue with altered hue—
 In the gaze of the nightly moon;

To Constantia.—1 The rose] The red Rose B.

2 pleasant] fragrant B.

For the planet of frost, so cold and bright,
Makes it wan with her borrowed light.

5

II

Such is my heart—roses are fair,
And that at best a withered blossom;
But thy false care did idly wear
Its withered leaves in a faithless bosom;
And fed with love, like air and dew,
Its growth—

10

FRAGMENT: TO ONE SINGING

[Dated 1817 by Mrs. Shelley, and published in the *Poetical Works*, 1839, 1st edition. The MS. original, by which Mr. Locock has revised and (by one line) enlarged the text, is amongst the Shelley MSS. at the Bodleian. The metre, as Mr. Locock (*Examination*, &c., 1903, p. 63) points out, is *terza rima*.]

My spirit like a charmed bark doth swim
Upon the liquid waves of thy sweet singing,
Far far away into the regions dim
Of rapture—as a boat, with swift sails winging
Its way adown some many-winding river,
Speeds through dark forests o'er the waters swinging . . .

5

A FRAGMENT: TO MUSIC

[Published in *Poetical Works*, 1839, 1st ed. Dated 1817 (Mrs. Shelley).]

SILVER key of the fountain of tears,
Where the spirit drinks till the brain is wild;
Softest grave of a thousand fears,
Where their mother, Care, like a drowsy child,
Is laid asleep in flowers.

5

ANOTHER FRAGMENT TO MUSIC

[Published in *Poetical Works*, 1839, 1st ed. Dated 1817 (Mrs. Shelley).]

No, Music, thou art not the 'food of Love,'
Unless Love feeds upon its own sweet self,
Till it becomes all Music murmurs of.

'MIGHTY EAGLE'

SUPPOSED TO BE ADDRESSED TO WILLIAM GODWIN

[Published in 1882 (*P. W. of P. B. S.*) by Mr. H. Buxton Forman, C.B.,
by whom it is dated 1817.]

MIGHTY eagle! thou that soarest
O'er the misty mountain forest,

6 her omitted B. To One Singing.—3 Far far away B.; Far away 1839.
swinging B.; omitted 1839.

6 Speeds . . .

And amid the light of morning
 Like a cloud of glory hiest,
 And when night descends defiest
 The embattled tempests' warning!

TO THE LORD CHANCELLOR

[Published in part (v-ix, xiv) by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed. (without title); in full 2nd ed. (with title). Four transcripts in Mrs. Shelley's hand are extant: two—Leigh Hunt's and Ch. Cowden Clarke's—described by Forman, and two belonging to Mr. C. W. Frederickson of Brooklyn, described by Woodberry [*P. W.*, *Centenary Edition*, iii. 193-6]. One of the latter (here referred to as *Fa*) is corrected in Shelley's autograph. A much-corrected draft in Shelley's hand is in the Harvard MS. book.]

I

THY country's curse is on thee, darkest crest
 Of that foul, knotted, many-headed worm
 Which rends our Mother's bosom—Priestly Pest!
 Masked Resurrection of a buried Form!

II

Thy country's curse is on thee! Justice sold,
 Truth trampled, Nature's landmarks overthrown,
 And heaps of fraud-accumulated gold,
 Plead, loud as thunder, at Destruction's throne.

III

And, whilst that sure slow Angel which aye stands
 Watching the beck of Mutability
 Delays to execute her high commands,
 And, though a nation weeps, spares thine and thee.

IV

Oh, let a father's curse be on thy soul,
 And let a daughter's hope be on thy tomb;
 Be both, on thy gray head, a leaden cowl
 To weigh thee down to thine approaching doom!

V

I curse thee by a parent's outraged love,
 By hopes long cherished and too lately lost,
 By gentle feelings thou couldst never prove,
 By griefs which thy stern nature never crossed;

VI

By those infantine smiles of happy light,
 Which were a fire within a stranger's hearth,
 Quenched even when kindled, in untimely night
 Hiding the promise of a lovely birth:

9 Angel which aye cancelled by Shelley for Fate which ever *Fa*.
 2nd ed.; promises of 1839, 1st ed.

24 promise of a 1839

VII

By those unpractised accents of young speech,
Which he who is a father thought to frame
To gentlest lore, such as the wisest teach—
Thou strike the lyre of mind!—oh, grief and shame!

VIII

By all the happy see in children's growth—
That undeveloped flower of budding years—
Sweetness and sadness interwoven both,
Source of the sweetest hopes and saddest fears—

IX

By all the days, under an hireling's care,
Of dull constraint and bitter heaviness,—
O wretched ye if ever any were,—
Sadder than orphans, yet not fatherless!

X

By the false cant which on their innocent lips
Must hang like poison on an opening bloom,
By the dark creeds which cover with eclipse
Their pathway from the cradle to the tomb—

XI

By thy most impious Hell, and all its terror;
By all the grief, the madness, and the guilt
Of thine impostures, which must be their error—
That sand on which thy crumbling power is built—

XII

By thy complicity with lust and hate—
Thy thirst for tears—thy hunger after gold—
The ready frauds which ever on thee wait—
The servile arts in which thou hast grown old—

XIII

By thy most killing sneer, and by thy smile—
By all the arts and snares of thy black den,
And—for thou canst outweep the crocodile—
By thy false tears—those millstones braining men—

XIV

By all the hate which checks a father's love—
By all the scorn which kills a father's care—
By those most impious hands which dared remove
Nature's high bounds—by thee—and by despair—

27 lore] love *Fa.* 32 and saddest] the saddest *Fa.* 36 yet not fatherless! *cancelled*
by *Shelley* for why not fatherless? *Fa.* 41-4 By . . . built 'crossed by *Shelley* and marked
dele by *Mrs. Shelley*' (*Woodberry*) *Fa.* 50 arts and snares 1839, 1st ed.; snares and arts *Harvard*
Coll. MS.; snares and nets *Fa*; acts and snares 1839, 2nd ed.

XV

Yes, the despair which bids a father groan,
 And cry, 'My children are no longer mine—
 The blood within those veins may be mine own,
 But—Tyrant—their polluted souls are thine;—'

60

XVI

I curse thee—though I hate thee not.—O slave!
 If thou couldst quench the earth-consuming Hell
 Of which thou art a daemon, on thy grave
 This curse should be a blessing. Fare thee well!

TO WILLIAM SHELLEY

[Published by Mrs. Shelley (i, v, vi), *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.; in full, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed. A transcript is extant in Mrs. Shelley's hand.]

I

THE billows on the beach are leaping around it,
 The bark is weak and frail,
 The sea looks black, and the clouds that bound it
 Darkly strew the gale.
 Come with me, thou delightful child,
 Come with me, though the wave is wild,
 And the winds are loose, we must not stay,
 Or the slaves of the law may rend thee away.

5

II

They have taken thy brother and sister dear,
 They have made them unfit for thee;
 They have withered the smile and dried the tear
 Which should have been sacred to me.
 To a blighting faith and a cause of crime
 They have bound them slaves in youthly prime,
 And they will curse my name and thee
 Because we fearless are and free.

10

15

III

Come thou, belovèd as thou art;
 Another sleepeth still
 Near thy sweet mother's anxious heart,
 Which thou with joy shalt fill,
 With fairest smiles of wonder thrown
 On that which is indeed our own,
 And which in distant lands will be
 The dearest playmate unto thee.

20

59 those] their *Fa.*

1 on the beach omitted 1839, 1st ed. 8 of the law 1839, 1st ed.; of law 1839, 2nd ed.
 transcript; time edd. 1839. 16 fearless are edd. 1839; are fearless transcript.

14 prime
 20 shalt

IV

Fear not the tyrants will rule for ever, 25
 Or the priests of the evil faith;
 They stand on the brink of that raging river,
 Whose waves they have tainted with death.
 It is fed from the depth of a thousand dells,
 Around them it foams and rages and swells; 30
 And their swords and their sceptres I floating see,
 Like wrecks on the surge of eternity.

V

Rest, rest, and shriek not, thou gentle child!
 The rocking of the boat thou fearest,
 And the cold spray and the clamour wild?— 35
 There, sit between us two, thou dearest—
 Me and thy mother—well we know
 The storm at which thou tremblest so,
 With all its dark and hungry graves,
 Less cruel than the savage slaves 40
 Who hunt us o'er these sheltering waves.

VI

This hour will in thy memory
 Be a dream of days forgotten long.
 We soon shall dwell by the azure sea
 Of serene and golden Italy, 45
 Or Greece, the Mother of the free;
 And I will teach thine infant tongue
 To call upon those heroes old
 In their own language, and will mould
 Thy growing spirit in the flame 50
 Of Grecian lore, that by such name
 A patriot's birthright thou mayst claim!

FROM THE ORIGINAL DRAFT OF THE POEM
 TO WILLIAM SHELLEY

[Published in Dr. Garnett's *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

I

THE world is now our dwelling-place;
 Where'er the earth one fading trace
 Of what was great and free does keep,
 That is our home! . . .
 Mild thoughts of man's ungente race 5
 Shall our contented exile reap;

25-32 Fear . . . eternity omitted, transcript. See Rosalind and Helen, ll. 894-901. 33 and
 transcript; omitted edd. 1839. 41 us transcript, 1839, 1st ed.; thee 1839, 2nd ed. 42 will
 in transcript, 1839, 2nd ed.; will sometime in 1839, 1st ed. 43 long transcript; omitted edd. 1839.
 48 those transcript, 1839, 1st ed.; their 1839, 2nd ed.

For who that in some happy place
His own free thoughts can freely chase
By woods and waves can clothe his face
In cynic smiles? Child! we shall weep.

10

II

This lament,
The memory of thy grievous wrong
Will fade . . .
But genius is omnipotent
To hallow . . .

15

ON FANNY GODWIN

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, among the poems of 1817, in *P. W.*,
1839, 1st ed.]

HER voice did quiver as we parted,
Yet knew I not that heart was broken
From which it came, and I departed
Heeding not the words then spoken.
Misery—O Misery,
This world is all too wide for thee.

5

LINES

[Published by Mrs. Shelley with the date 'November 5th, 1817,'
in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

THAT time is dead for ever, child!
Drowned, frozen, dead for ever!
We look on the past
And stare aghast
At the spectres wailing, pale and
ghast, 5
Of hopes which thou and I beguiled
To death on life's dark river.

II

The stream we gazed on then rolled by;
Its waves are unreturning;
But we yet stand 10
In a lone land,
Like tombs to mark the memory
Of hopes and fears, which fade and
flee
In the light of life's dim morning.

DEATH

[Published by Mrs. Shelley in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

THEY die—the dead return not—Misery
Sits near an open grave and calls them over,
A Youth with hoary hair and haggard eye—
They are the names of kindred, friend and lover,
Which he so feebly calls—they all are gone—
Fond wretch, all dead! those vacant names alone,
This most familiar scene, my pain—
These tombs—alone remain.

5

Death.—5 calls *edd.* 1839; called 1824.

II

Misery, my sweetest friend—oh, weep no more!
 Thou wilt not be consoled—I wonder not!
 For I have seen thee from thy dwelling's door
 Watch the calm sunset with them, and this spot
 Was even as bright and calm, but transitory,
 And now thy hopes are gone, thy hair is hoary;
 This most familiar scene, my pain—
 These tombs—alone remain.

OTHO

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.]

I

THOU wert not, Cassius, and thou couldst not be,
 Last of the Romans, though thy memory claim
 From Brutus his own glory—and on thee
 Rests the full splendour of his sacred fame;
 Nor he who dared make the foul tyrant quail
 Amid his cowering senate with thy name,
 Though thou and he were great—it will avail
 To thine own fame that Otho's should not fail.

II

'Twill wrong thee not—thou wouldst, if thou couldst feel,
 Abjure such envious fame—great Otho died
 Like thee—he sanctified his country's steel,
 At once the tyrant and tyrannicide,
 In his own blood—a deed it was to bring
 Tears from all men—though full of gentle pride,
 Such pride as from impetuous love may spring,
 That will not be refused its offering.

FRAGMENTS SUPPOSED TO BE PARTS OF OTHO

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862,—where, however, only the fragment numbered ii. is assigned to *Otho*. Forman (1876) connects all three fragments with that projected poem.]

I

THOSE whom nor power, nor lying faith, nor toil,
 Nor custom, queen of many slaves, makes blind,
 Have ever grieved that man should be the spoil
 Of his own weakness, and with earnest mind
 Fed hopes of its redemption; these recur
 Chastened by deathful victory now, and find
 Foundations in this foulest age, and stir
 Me whom they cheer to be their minister.

Otho.—13 bring *cj. Garnett*; buy 1839, 1st ed.; wring *cj. Rossetti*.

II

Dark is the realm of grief: but human things
Those may not know who cannot weep for them.

10

III

Once more descend
The shadows of my soul upon mankind,
For to those hearts with which they never blend,
Thoughts are but shadows which the flashing mind
From the swift clouds which track its flight of fire,
Casts on the gloomy world it leaves behind.

15

‘O THAT A CHARIOT OF CLOUD WERE MINE’

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

O THAT a chariot of cloud were mine!
Of cloud which the wild tempest weaves in air,
When the moon over the ocean’s line
Is spreading the locks of her bright gray hair.
O that a chariot of cloud were mine!
I would sail on the waves of the billowy wind
To the mountain peak and the rocky lake,
And the . . .

5

FRAGMENT: TO A FRIEND RELEASED FROM PRISON

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

FOR me, my friend, if not that tears did tremble
In my faint eyes, and that my heart beat fast
With feelings which make rapture pain resemble,
Yet, from thy voice that falsehood starts aghast,
I thank thee—let the tyrant keep
His chains and tears, yea, let him weep
With rage to see thee freshly risen,
Like strength from slumber, from the prison,
In which he vainly hoped the soul to bind
Which on the chains must prey that fetter humankind.

5

10

FRAGMENT: SATAN BROKEN LOOSE

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870.]

A GOLDEN-WINGED Angel stood
Before the Eternal Judgement-seat:
His looks were wild, and Devils’ blood
Stained his dainty hands and feet.

The Father and the Son
 Knew that strife was now begun. 5
 They knew that Satan had broken his chain,
 And with millions of daemons in his train,
 Was ranging over the world again,
 Before the Angel had told his tale, 10
 A sweet and a creeping sound
 Like the rushing of wings was heard around;
 And suddenly the lamps grew pale—
 The lamps, before the Archangels seven,
 That burn continually in Heaven. 15

FRAGMENT: *IGNICULUS DESIDERII*

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed. This fragment is amongst the Shelley MSS. at the Bodleian. See Mr. C. D. Locock's *Examination*, &c., 1903, p. 63.]

To thirst and find no fill—to wail and wander
 With short unsteady steps—to pause and ponder—
 To feel the blood run through the veins and tingle
 Where busy thought and blind sensation mingle;
 To nurse the image of unfelt caresses 5
 Till dim imagination just possesses
 The half-created shadow, then all the night
 Sick . . .

FRAGMENT: *AMOR AETERNUS*

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.]

WEALTH and dominion fade into the mass
 Of the great sea of human right and wrong,
 When once from our possession they must pass;
 But love, though misdirected, is among
 The things which are immortal, and surpass 5
 All that frail stuff which will be—or which was.

FRAGMENT: THOUGHTS COME AND GO IN
SOLITUDE

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.]

MY thoughts arise and fade in solitude,
 The verse that would invest them melts away
 Like moonlight in the heaven of spreading day:
 How beautiful they were, how firm they stood,
 Flecking the starry sky like woven pearl! 5

A HATE-SONG

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870.]

A HATER he came and sat by a ditch,
 And he took an old cracked lute;
 And he sang a song which was more of a screech
 'Gainst a woman that was a brute.

LINES TO A CRITIC

[Published by Hunt in *The Liberal*, No. III, 1823. Reprinted in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824, where it is dated December, 1817.]

I
 HONEY from silkworms who can
 gather,
 Or silk from the yellow bee?
 The grass may grow in winter weather
 As soon as hate in me.

II
 Hate men who cant, and men who
 pray, 5
 And men who rail like thee:
 An equal passion to repay
 They are not coy like me.

III
 Or seek some slave of power and gold
 To be thy dear heart's mate;
 Thy love will move that bigot cold
 Sooner than me, thy hate.

IV
 A passion like the one I prove
 Cannot divided be;
 I hate thy want of truth and love— 15
 How should I then hate thee?

OZYMANDIAS

[Published by Hunt in *The Examiner*, January, 1818. Reprinted with *Rosalind and Helen*, 1819. There is a copy amongst the Shelley MSS. at the Bodleian Library. See Mr. C. D. Locock's *Examination*, &c., 1903, p. 46.]

I MET a traveller from an antique land
 Who said: Two vast and trunkless legs of stone
 Stand in the desert . . . Near them, on the sand,
 Half sunk, a shattered visage lies, whose frown,
 And wrinkled lip, and sneer of cold command,
 Tell that its sculptor well those passions read
 Which yet survive, stamped on these lifeless things,
 The hand that mocked them, and the heart that fed:
 And on the pedestal these words appear:
 'My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:
 Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!
 Nothing beside remains. Round the decay
 Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare
 The lone and level sands stretch far away.

Ozymandias.—9 these words appear] this legend clear B.

NOTE ON POEMS OF 1817, BY MRS. SHELLEY

THE very illness that oppressed, and the aspect of death which had approached so near Shelley, appear to have kindled to yet keener life the Spirit of Poetry in his heart. The restless thoughts kept awake by pain clothed themselves in verse. Much was composed during this year. The *Revolt of Islam*, written and printed, was a great effort—*Rosalind and Helen* was begun—and the fragments and poems can trace to the same period show how full of passion and reflection were his solitary hours.

In addition to such poems as have an intelligible aim and shape, many a stray idea and transitory emotion found imperfect and abrupt expression, and then again lost themselves in silence. As he never wandered without a book and without implements of writing, I find many such, in his manuscript books, that scarcely bear record; while some of them, broken and vague as they are, will appear valuable to those who love Shelley's mind, and desire to trace its workings.

He projected also translating the *Hymns* of Homer; his version of several of the shorter ones remains, as well as that to Mercury already published in the *Posthumous Poems*. His readings this year were chiefly Greek. Besides the *Hymns* of Homer and the *Iliad*, he read the dramas of Aeschylus and Sophocles, the *Symposium* of Plato, and Arrian's *Historia Indica*. In Latin, Apuleius alone is named. In English, the Bible was his constant study; he read a great portion of it aloud in the evening. Among these evening readings I find also mentioned the *Faerie Queen*; and other modern works, the production of his contemporaries, Coleridge, Wordsworth, Moore, and Byron.

His life was now spent more in thought than action—he had lost the eager spirit which believed it could achieve what it projected for the benefit of mankind. And yet in the converse of daily life Shelley was far from being a melancholy man. He was eloquent when philosophy or politics or taste were the subjects of conversation. He was playful; and indulged in the wild spirit that mocked itself and others—not in bitterness, but in sport. The author of *Nightmare Abbey* seized on some points of his character and some habits of his life when he painted Scythrop. He was not addicted to 'port or madeira,' but in youth he had read of 'Illuminati and Eleutherarchs,' and believed that he possessed the power of operating an immediate change in the minds of men and the state of society. These wild dreams had faded; sorrow and adversity had struck home; but he struggled with despondency as he did with physical pain. There are few who remember him sailing paper boats, and watching the navigation of his tiny craft with eagerness—or repeating with wild energy *The Ancient Mariner*, and Southey's *Old Woman of Berkeley*; but those who do will recollect that it was in such, and in the creations of his own fancy when that was most daring and ideal, that he sheltered himself from the storms and disappointments, the pain and sorrow, that beset his life.

No words can express the anguish he felt when his elder children were torn from him. In his first resentment against the Chancellor, on the passing of the decree, he had written a curse, in which there breathes, besides haughty indignation, all the tenderness of a father's love, which could imagine and fondly dwell upon its loss and the consequences.

At one time, while the question was still pending, the Chancellor had said some words that seemed to intimate that Shelley should not be permitted the care of any of his children, and for a moment he feared that our infant son would be torn

from us. He did not hesitate to resolve, if such were menaced, to abandon country, fortune, everything, and to escape with his child; and I find some unfinished stanzas addressed to this son, whom afterwards we lost at Rome, written under the idea that we might suddenly be forced to cross the sea, so to preserve him. This poem, as well as the one previously quoted, were not written to exhibit the pangs of distress to the public; they were the spontaneous outbursts of a man who brooded over his wrongs and woes, and was impelled to shed the grace of his genius over the uncontrollable emotions of his heart. I ought to observe that the fourth verse of this effusion is introduced in *Rosalind and Helen*. When afterwards this child died at Rome, he wrote, *à propos* of the English burying-ground in that city: 'This spot is the repository of a sacred loss, of which the yearnings of a parent's heart are now prophetic; he is rendered immortal by love, as his memory is by death. My beloved child lies buried here. I envy death the body far less than the oppressors the minds of those whom they have torn from me. The one can only kill the body, the other crushes the affections.'

POEMS WRITTEN IN 1818

TO THE NILE

[Found by Mr. Townshend Meyer among the papers of Leigh Hunt, [and] published in the *St. James's Magazine* for March, 1876.' (Mr. H. Buxton Forman, C.B.; *P. W. of P. B. S.*, Library Edition, 1876, vol. iii, p. 410.) First included among Shelley's poetical works in Mr. Forman's Library Edition, where a facsimile of the MS. is given. Composed February 4, 1818. See *Complete Works of John Keats*, ed. H. Buxton Forman, Glasgow, 1901, vol. iv, p. 76.]

MONTH after month the gathered rains descend
 Drenching yon secret Aethiopian dells,
 And from the desert's ice-girt pinnacles
 Where Frost and Heat in strange embraces blend
 On Atlas, fields of moist snow half depend.
 Girt there with blasts and meteors Tempest dwells
 By Nile's æreal urn, with rapid spells
 Urging those waters to their mighty end.
 O'er Egypt's land of Memory floods are level
 And they are thine, O Nile—and well thou knowest
 That soul-sustaining airs and blasts of evil
 And fruits and poisons spring where'er thou flowest.
 Beware, O Man—for knowledge must to thee,
 Like the great flood to Egypt, ever be.

PASSAGE OF THE APENNINES

[Composed May 4, 1818. Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. There is a copy amongst the Shelley MSS. at the Bodleian Library, which supplies the last word of the fragment.]

LISTEN, listen, Mary mine,
 To the whisper of the Apennine,
 It bursts on the roof like the thunder's roar,
 Or like the sea on a northern shore,

Heard in its raging ebb and flow
 By the captives pent in the cave below.
 The Apennine in the light of day
 Is a mighty mountain dim and gray,
 Which between the earth and sky doth lay;
 But when night comes, a chaos dread
 On the dim starlight then is spread,
 And the Apennine walks abroad with the storm,
 Shrouding . . .

5

10

THE PAST

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

WILT thou forget the happy hours
 Which we buried in Love's sweet bowers,
 Heaping over their corpses cold
 Blossoms and leaves, instead of mould?
 Blossoms which were the joys that fell,
 And leaves, the hopes that yet remain.

5

II

Forget the dead, the past? Oh, yet
 There are ghosts that may take revenge for it,
 Memories that make the heart a tomb,
 Regrets which glide through the spirit's gloom,
 And with ghastly whispers tell
 That joy, once lost, is pain.

10

TO MARY ———

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

O MARY dear, that you were here	Of this azure Italy.	
With your brown eyes bright and clear,	Mary dear, come to me soon,	10
And your sweet voice, like a bird	I am not well whilst thou art far;	
Singing love to its lone mate	As sunset to the spherèd moon,	
In the ivy bower disconsolate;	As twilight to the western star,	
Voice the sweetest ever heard!	Thou, belovèd, art to me.	
And your brow more . . .	O Mary dear, that you were here;	15
Than the sky	The Castle echo whispers 'Here!'	

ON A FADED VIOLET

[Published by Hunt, *Literary Pocket-Book*, 1821. Reprinted by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. Again reprinted, with several variants, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed. Our text is that of the *editio princeps*, 1821. A transcript is extant in a letter from Shelley to Sophia Stacey, dated March 7, 1820.]

I

THE odour from the flower is gone
 Which like thy kisses breathed on me;

On a Faded Violet.—1 odour] colour 1839. 2 kisses breathed] sweet eyes smiled 1839.

T

The colour from the flower is flown
Which glowed of thee and only thee!

II

A shrivelled, lifeless, vacant form,
It lies on my abandoned breast,
And mocks the heart which yet is warm,
With cold and silent rest.

III

I weep,—my tears revive it not!
I sigh,—it breathes no more on me;
Its mute and uncomplaining lot
Is such as mine should be.

LINES WRITTEN AMONG THE EUGANEAN HILLS

OCTOBER, 1818.

[Composed at Este, October, 1818. Published with *Rosalind and Helen*, 1819. Amongst the late Mr. Fredk. Locker-Lampson's collections at Rowfant there is a MS. of the lines (167-205) on Byron, interpolated after the completion of the poem.]

MANY a green isle needs must be
In the deep wide sea of Misery,
Or the mariner, worn and wan,
Never thus could voyage on—
Day and night, and night and day, 5
Drifting on his dreary way,
With the solid darkness black
Closing round his vessel's track;
Whilst above the sunless sky,
Big with clouds, hangs heavily, 10
And behind the tempest fleet
Hurries on with lightning feet,
Riving sail, and cord, and plank,
Till the ship has almost drank 14
Death from the o'er-brimming deep;
And sinks down, down, like that sleep
When the dreamer seems to be
Weltering through eternity;
And the dim low line before
Of a dark and distant shore 20
Still recedes, as ever still
Longing with divided will,
But no power to seek or shun,
He is ever drifted on
O'er the unreposing wave 25
To the haven of the grave.

What, if there no friends will greet;
What, if there no heart will meet
His with love's impatient beat;
Wander wheresoe'er he may, 30
Can he dream before that day
To find refuge from distress
In friendship's smile, in love's caress?
Then 'twill wreak him little woe
Whether such there be or no: 35
Senseless is the breast, and cold,
Which relenting love would fold;
Bloodless are the veins and chill
Which the pulse of pain did fill;
Every little living nerve 40
That from bitter words did swerve
Round the tortured lips and brow,
Are like sapless leaflets now
Frozen upon December's bough.

On the beach of a northern sea 45
Which tempests shake eternally,
As once the wretch there lay to sleep,
Lies a solitary heap,
One white skull and seven dry bones,
On the margin of the stones, 50
Where a few grass rushes stand,

3 colour] odour 1839.

4 glowed] breathed 1839.

5 shrivelled] withered 1839.

8 cold and silent *all edd.*; its cold, silent *Stacey MS.*

Boundaries of the sea and land :		Amphitrite's destined halls,	
Nor is heard one voice of wail		Which her hoary sire now paves	
But the sea-mews, as they sail		With his blue and beaming waves.	
O'er the billows of the gale ;	55	Lo ! the sun upsprings behind,	100
Or the whirlwind up and down		Broad, red, radiant, half-reclined	
Howling, like a slaughtered town,		On the level quivering line	
When a king in glory rides		Of the waters crystalline ;	
Through the pomp of fratricides :		And before that chasm of light,	
Those unburied bones around	60	As within a furnace bright,	105
There is many a mournful sound ;		Column, tower, and dome, and spire,	
There is no lament for him,		Shine like obelisks of fire,	
Like a sunless vapour, dim,		Pointing with inconstant motion	
Who once clothed with life and		From the altar of dark ocean	
thought		To the sapphire-tinted skies ;	110
What now moves nor murmurs not.	65	As the flames of sacrifice	
		From the marble shrines did rise,	
Ay, many flowering islands lie		As to pierce the dome of gold	
In the waters of wide Agony :		Where Apollo spoke of old.	
To such a one this morn was led,			
My bark by soft winds piloted :		Sun-girt City, thou hast been	115
'Mid the mountains Euganean	70	Ocean's child, and then his queen ;	
I stood listening to the paean		Now is come a darker day,	
With which the legioned rooks did hail		And thou soon must be his prey,	
The sun's uprising majestical ;		If the power that raised thee here	
Gathering round with wings all hoar,		Hallow so thy watery bier.	120
Through the dewy mist they soar	75	A less drear ruin than then now,	
Like gray shades, till the eastern		With thy conquest-branded brow	
heaven		Stooping to the slave of slaves	
Bursts, and then, as clouds of even,		From thy throne, among the waves	
Flecked with fire and azure, lie		Wilt thou be, when the sea-mew	125
In the unfathomable sky,		Flies, as once before it flew,	
So their plumes of purple grain,	80	O'er thine isles depopulate,	
Starred with drops of golden rain,		And all is in its ancient state,	
Gleam above the sunlight woods,		Save where many a palace gate	
As in silent multitudes		With green sea-flowers overgrown	130
On the morning's fitful gale		Like a rock of Ocean's own,	
Through the broken mist they sail,	85	Topples o'er the abandoned sea	
And the vapours cloven and gleaming		As the tides change sullenly.	
Follow, down the dark steep streaming,		The fisher on his watery way,	
Till all is bright, and clear, and still,		Wandering at the close of day,	135
Round the solitary hill.		Will spread his sail and seize his oar	
		Till he pass the gloomy shore,	
Beneath is spread like a green sea	90	Lest thy dead should, from their sleep	
The waveless plain of Lombardy,		Bursting o'er the starlight deep,	
Bounded by the vaporous air,		Lead a rapid masque of death	140
Islanded by cities fair ;		O'er the waters of his path.	
Underneath Day's azure eyes			
Ocean's nursling, Venice lies,	95	Those who alone thy towers behold	
A peopled labyrinth of walls,		Quivering through æreal gold,	

As I now behold them here,
 Would imagine not they were 145
 Sepulchres, where human forms,
 Like pollution-nourished worms,
 To the corpse of greatness cling,
 Murdered, and now mouldering :
 But if Freedom should awake 150
 In her omnipotence, and shake
 From the Celtic Anarch's hold
 All the keys of dungeons cold,
 Where a hundred cities lie
 Chained like thee, ingloriously, 155
 Thou and all thy sister band
 Might adorn this sunny land,
 Twining memories of old time
 With new virtues more sublime ;
 If not, perish thou and they !— 160
 Clouds which stain truth's rising day
 By her sun consumed away—
 Earth can spare ye : while like flowers,
 In the waste of years and hours,
 From your dust new nations spring 165
 With more kindly blossoming.

Perish—let there only be
 Floating o'er thy heartless sea
 As the garment of thy sky
 Clothes the world immortally, 170
 One remembrance, more sublime
 Than the tattered pall of time,
 Which scarce hides thy visage wan ;—
 That a tempest-cleaving Swan
 Of the songs of Albion, 175
 Driven from his ancestral streams
 By the might of evil dreams,
 Found a nest in thee ; and Ocean
 Welcomed him with such emotion
 That its joy grew his, and sprung 180
 From his lips like music flung
 O'er a mighty thunder-fit,
 Chastening terror :—what though yet
 Poesy's unfailing River,
 Which through Albion winds forever
 Lashing with melodious wave 186
 Many a sacred Poet's grave,
 Mourn its latest nursling fled ?
 What though thou with all thy dead
 Scarce can for this fame repay 190

Aught thine own ? oh, rather say
 Though thy sins and slaveries foul
 Overcloud a sunlike soul ?
 As the ghost of Homer clings
 Round Scamander's wasting springs ;
 As divinest Shakespeare's might 196
 Fills Avon and the world with light
 Like omniscient power which he
 Imaged 'mid mortality ;
 As the love from Petrarch's urn, 200
 Yet amid yon hills doth burn,
 A quenchless lamp by which the heart
 Sees things unearthly ;—so thou art,
 Mighty spirit—so shall be
 The City that did refuge thee, 205

Lo, the sun floats up the sky
 Like thought-winged Liberty,
 Till the universal light
 Seems to level plain and height ;
 From the sea a mist has spread, 210
 And the beams of morn lie dead
 On the towers of Venice now,
 Like its glory long ago.
 By the skirts of that gray cloud
 Many-domed Padua proud 215
 Stands, a peopled solitude,
 'Mid the harvest-shining plain,
 Where the peasant heaps his grain
 In the garner of his foe,
 And the milk-white oxen slow 220
 With the purple vintage strain,
 Heaped upon the creaking wain,
 That the brutal Celt may swill
 Drunken sleep with savage will ;
 And the sickle to the sword 225
 Lies unchanged, though many a lord,
 Like a weed whose shade is poison,
 Overgrows this region's foison,
 Sheaves of whom are ripe to come
 To destruction's harvest-home : 230
 Men must reap the things they sow,
 Force from force must ever flow,
 Or worse ; but 'tis a bitter woe
 That love or reason cannot change
 The despot's rage, the slave's revenge.
 Padua, thou within whose walls 236
 Those mute guests at festivals,

165 From your dust new 1819 ; From thy dust shall *Rowfant MS.* (heading of ll. 167–205).
 175 songs 1819 ; sons *cf. Forman.*

Son and Mother, Death and Sin,
 Played at dice for Ezzelin,
 Till Death cried, 'I win, I win!' 240
 And Sin cursed to lose the wager,
 But Death promised, to assuage her,
 That he would petition for
 Her to be made Vice-Emperor,
 When the destined years were o'er, 245
 Over all between the Po
 And the eastern Alpine snow,
 Under the mighty Austrian.
 Sin smiled so as Sin only can, 249
 And since that time, ay, long before,
 Both have ruled from shore to shore,—
 That incestuous pair, who follow
 Tyrants as the sun the swallow,
 As Repentance follows Crime,
 And as changes follow Time. 255

In thine halls the lamp of learning,
 Padua, now no more is burning;
 Like a meteor, whose wild way
 Is lost over the grave of day,
 It gleams betrayed and to betray: 260
 Once remotest nations came
 To adore that sacred flame,
 When it lit not many a hearth
 On this cold and gloomy earth:
 Now new fires from antique light 265
 Spring beneath the wide world's
 might;
 But their spark lies dead in thee,
 Trampled out by Tyranny.
 As the Norway woodman quells,
 In the depth of piny dells, 270
 One light flame among the brakes,
 While the boundless forest shakes,
 And its mighty trunks are torn
 By the fire thus lowly born:
 The spark beneath his feet is dead, 275
 He starts to see the flames it fed
 Howling through the darkened sky
 With a myriad tongues victoriously,
 And sinks down in fear: so thou,
 O Tyranny, beholdest now 280
 Light around thee, and thou hearest
 The loud flames ascend, and fearest:
 Grovel on the earth; ay, hide
 In the dust thy purple pride!

Noon descends around me now: 285
 'Tis the noon of autumn's glow,
 When a soft and purple mist
 Like a vaporous amethyst,
 Or an air-dissolved star
 Mingling light and fragrance, far 290
 From the curved horizon's bound
 To the point of Heaven's profound,
 Fills the overflowing sky;
 And the plains that silent lie
 Underneath, the leaves unsodden 295
 Where the infant Frost has trodden
 With his morning-wingèd feet,
 Whose bright print is gleaming yet;
 And the red and golden vines,
 Piercing with their trellised lines 300
 The rough, dark-skirted wilderness;
 The dun and bladed grass no less,
 Pointing from this hoary tower
 In the windless air; the flower
 Glimmering at my feet; the line 305
 Of the olive-sandalled Apennine
 In the south dimly islanded;
 And the Alps, whose snows are spread
 High between the clouds and sun;
 And of living things each one; 310
 And my spirit which so long
 Darkened this swift stream of song,—
 Interpenetrated lie
 By the glory of the sky:
 Be it love, light, harmony, 315
 Odour, or the soul of all
 Which from Heaven like dew doth fall,
 Or the mind which feeds this verse
 Peopling the lone universe.

Noon descends, and after noon 320
 Autumn's evening meets me soon,
 Leading the infantine moon,
 And that one star, which to her
 Almost seems to minister
 Half the crimson light she brings 325
 From the sunset's radiant springs:
 And the soft dreams of the morn
 (Which like wingèd winds had borne
 To that silent isle, which lies
 Mid remembered agonies, 330
 The frail bark of this lone being)
 Pass, to other sufferers fleeing,

And its ancient pilot, Pain,
Sits beside the helm again.

Other flowering isles must be 335
In the sea of Life and Agony :
Other spirits float and flee
O'er that gulf : even now, perhaps,
On some rock the wild wave wraps,
With folded wings they waiting sit 340
For my bark, to pilot it
To some calm and blooming cove,
Where for me, and those I love,
May a windless bower be built,
Far from passion, pain, and guilt, 345
In a dell mid lawny hills,
Which the wild sea-murmur fills,
And soft sunshine, and the sound
Of old forests echoing round,
And the light and smell divine 350
Of all flowers that breathe and shine :
We may live so happy there,
That the Spirits of the Air,

Envyng us, may even entice
To our healing Paradise 355
The polluting multitude ;
But their rage would be subdued
By that clime divine and calm,
And the winds whose wings rain balm
On the uplifted soul, and leaves 360
Under which the bright sea heaves ;
While each breathless interval
In their whisperings musical
The inspired soul supplies
With its own deep melodies, 365
And the love which heals all strife
Circling, like the breath of life,
All things in that sweet abode
With its own mild brotherhood :
They, not it, would change ; and
soon 370
Every sprite beneath the moon
Would repent its envy vain,
And the earth grow young again.

SCENE FROM 'TASSO'

[Composed, 1818. Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

MADDALO, *a Courtier.*
MALPIGLIO, *a Poet.*

PIGNA, *a Minister.*
ALBANO, *an Usher.*

Maddalo. No access to the Duke ! You have not said
That the Count Maddalo would speak with him ?

Pigna. Did you inform his Grace that Signor Pigna
Waits with state papers for his signature ?

Malpiglio. The Lady Leonora cannot know
That I have written a sonnet to her fame,
In which I Venus and Adonis.

You should not take my gold and serve me not.

Albano. In truth I told her, and she smiled and said,
'If I am Venus, thou, coy Poesy,
Art the Adonis whom I love, and he
The Erymanthian boar that wounded him.'
O trust to me, Signor Malpiglio,
Those nods and smiles were favours worth the zechin.

Malpiglio. The words are twisted in some double sense
That I reach not: the smiles fell not on me.

Pigna. How are the Duke and Duchess occupied ?

Albano. Buried in some strange talk. The Duke was leaning,
His finger on his brow, his lips unclosed.
The Princess sate within the window-seat,
And so her face was hid ; but on her knee
Her hands were clasped, veined, and pale as snow,

And quivering—young Tasso, too, was there.

Maddalo. Thou seest on whom from thine own worshipped heaven
Thou drawest down smiles—they did not rain on thee.

25

Malpiglio. Would they were parching lightnings for his sake
On whom they fell!

SONG FOR 'TASSO'

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

I LOVED—alas! our life is love;
But when we cease to breathe and move
I do suppose love ceases too.
I thought, but not as now I do,
Keen thoughts and bright of linkèd lore,
Of all that men had thought before,
And all that Nature shows, and more.

5

II

And still I love and still I think,
But strangely, for my heart can drink
The dregs of such despair, and live,
And love; . . .
And if I think, my thoughts come fast,
I mix the present with the past,
And each seems uglier than the last.

10

III

Sometimes I see before me flee
A silver spirit's form, like thee,
O Leonora, and I sit
. . . still watching it,
Till by the grated casement's ledge
It fades, with such a sigh, as sedge
Breathes o'er the breezy streamlet's edge.

15

20

INVOCATION TO MISERY

[Published by Medwin, *The Athenæum*, Sept. 8, 1832. Reprinted (as *Misery*, a *Fragment*) by Mrs. Shelley, *Poetical Works*, 1839, 1st ed. Our text is that of 1839. A pencil copy of this poem is amongst the Shelley MSS. at the Bodleian Library. See Mr. C. D. Locock's *Examination*, &c., 1903, p. 38. The readings of this copy are indicated by the letter *B.* in the footnotes.]

I

COME, be happy!—sit near me,
Shadow-vested Misery:
Coy, unwilling, silent bride,
Mourning in thy robe of pride,
Desolation—deified!

5

II

Come, be happy!—sit near me:
Sad as I may seem to thee,
I am happier far than thou,
Lady, whose imperial brow
Is endiademed with woe.

10

Invocation to Misery.—I near *B.*, 1839; by 1832.

8 happier far] merrier yet *B.*

III

Misery! we have known each other,
Like a sister and a brother
Living in the same lone home,
Many years—we must live some
Hours or ages yet to come.

15

IV

'Tis an evil lot, and yet
Let us make the best of it;
If love can live when pleasure dies,
We two will love, till in our eyes
This heart's Hell seem Paradise.

20

V

Come, be happy!—lie thee down
On the fresh grass newly mown,
Where the Grasshopper doth sing
Merrily—one joyous thing
In a world of sorrowing!

25

VI

There our tent shall be the willow,
And mine arm shall be thy pillow;
Sounds and odours, sorrowful
Because they once were sweet, shall lull
Us to slumber, deep and dull.

30

VII

Ha! thy frozen pulses flutter
With a love thou darest not utter.
Thou art murmuring—thou art weep-
ing—
Is thine icy bosom leaping
While my burning heart lies sleep-
ing?

35

VIII

Kiss me;—oh! thy lips are cold:
Round my neck thine arms enfold—

They are soft, but chill and dead;
And thy tears upon my head
Burn like points of frozen lead.

40

IX

Hasten to the bridal bed—
Underneath the grave 'tis spread:
In darkness may our love be hid,
Oblivion be our coverlid—
We may rest, and none forbid.

45

X

Clasp me till our hearts be grown
Like two shadows into one;
Till this dreadful transport may
Like a vapour fade away,
In the sleep that lasts alway.

50

XI

We may dream, in that long sleep,
That we are not those who weep;
E'en as Pleasure dreams of thee,
Life-deserting Misery,
Thou mayst dream of her with me.

55

XII

Let us laugh, and make our mirth,
At the shadows of the earth,
As dogs bay the moonlight clouds,
Which, like spectres wrapped in
shrouds,
Pass o'er night in multitudes.

60

XIII

All the wide world, beside us,
Show like multitudinous
Puppets passing from a scene;
What but mockery can they mean,
Where I am—where thou hast been?

65

15 Hours or] Years and 1832. 17 best] most 1832. 19 We two will] We will 1832.
27 mine arm shall be thy B., 1839; thine arm shall be my 1832. 33 represented by asterisks,
1832. 34, 35 Thou art murmuring, thou art weeping, Whilst my burning bosom's leaping
1832; Was thine icy bosom leaping While my burning heart was sleeping B. 40 frozen 1832,
1839, B.; molten cf. *Forman*. 44 be] is B. 47 shadows] lovers 1832, B. 59 which
B., 1839; that 1832. 62 Show] Are 1832, B. 63 Puppets passing] Shadows shifting
1832; Shadows passing B. 64, 65 So B.; What but mockery may they mean? Where am I?
—Where thou hast been 1832.

STANZAS

WRITTEN IN DEJECTION, NEAR NAPLES

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824, where it is dated 'December, 1818.' A draft of stanza i is amongst the Boscombe MSS. (Garnett).]

I

THE sun is warm, the sky is clear,
 The waves are dancing fast and bright,
 Blue isles and snowy mountains wear
 The purple noon's transparent might,
 The breath of the moist earth is light, 5
 Around its unexpanded buds;
 Like many a voice of one delight,
 The winds, the birds, the ocean floods,
 The City's voice itself, is soft like Solitude's.

II

I see the Deep's untrampled floor 10
 With green and purple seaweeds strown;
 I see the waves upon the shore,
 Like light dissolved in star-showers, thrown:
 I sit upon the sands alone,—
 The lightning of the noontide ocean 15
 Is flashing round me, and a tone
 Arises from its measured motion,
 How sweet! did any heart now share in my emotion.

III

Alas! I have nor hope nor health,
 Nor peace within nor calm around, 20
 Nor that content surpassing wealth
 The sage in meditation found,
 And walked with inward glory crowned—
 Nor fame, nor power, nor love, nor leisure.
 Others I see whom these surround— 25
 Smiling they live, and call life pleasure;—
 To me that cup has been dealt in another measure.

IV

Yet now despair itself is mild,
 Even as the winds and waters are;
 I could lie down like a tired child, 30
 And weep away the life of care
 Which I have borne and yet must bear,

4 might Boscombe MS., Medwin 1847; light 1824, 1839. 5 The . . . light Boscombe MS.,
 1839, Medwin 1847; omitted, 1824. moist earth Boscombe MS.; moist air 1839; west wind Medwin
 1847. 17 measured 1824; mingled 1847. 18 did any heart now 1824; if any heart
 could Medwin 1847. 31 the 1824; this Medwin 1847.

Till death like sleep might steal on me,
 And I might feel in the warm air
 My cheek grow cold, and hear the sea
 Breathe o'er my dying brain its last monotony.

35

V

Some might lament that I were cold,
 As I, when this sweet day is gone,
 Which my lost heart, too soon grown old,
 Insults with this untimely moan;
 They might lament—for I am one
 Whom men love not,—and yet regret,
 Unlike this day, which, when the sun
 Shall on its stainless glory set,
 Will linger, though enjoyed, like joy in memory yet.

40

45

THE WOODMAN AND THE NIGHTINGALE

[Published in part (1-67) by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824;
 the remainder (68-70) by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

A WOODMAN whose rough heart was out of tune
 (I think such hearts yet never came to good)
 Hated to hear, under the stars or moon,

One nightingale in an interfluous wood
 Sate the hungry dark with melody;—
 And as a vale is watered by a flood,

5

Or as the moonlight fills the open sky
 Struggling with darkness—as a tuberosé
 Peoples some Indian dell with scents which lie

Like clouds above the flower from which they rose,
 The singing of that happy nightingale
 In this sweet forest, from the golden close

10

Of evening till the star of dawn may fail,
 Was interfused upon the silentness;
 The folded roses and the violets pale

15

Heard her within their slumbers, the abyss
 Of heaven with all its planets; the dull ear
 Of the night-cradled earth; the loneliness

Of the circumfluous waters,—every sphere
 And every flower and beam and cloud and wave,
 And every wind of the mute atmosphere,

20

And every beast stretched in its rugged cave,
 And every bird lulled on its mossy bough,
 And every silver moth fresh from the grave

36 dying 1824; outworn *Medwin* 1847.

Which is its cradle—ever from below
 Aspiring like one who loves too fair, too far,
 To be consumed within the purest glow 25

Of one serene and unapproachèd star,
 As if it were a lamp of earthly light,
 Unconscious, as some human lovers are, 30

Itself how low, how high beyond all height
 The heaven where it would perish!—and every form
 That worshipped in the temple of the night

Was awed into delight, and by the charm
 Girt as with an interminable zone,
 Whilst that sweet bird, whose music was a storm 35

Of sound, shook forth the dull oblivion
 Out of their dreams; harmony became love
 In every soul but one.

And so this man returned with axe and saw 40
 At evening close from killing the tall treen,
 The soul of whom by Nature's gentle law

Was each a wood-nymph, and kept ever green
 The pavement and the roof of the wild copse,
 Chequering the sunlight of the blue serene 45

With jagged leaves,—and from the forest tops
 Singing the winds to sleep—or weeping oft
 Fast showers of aëreal water-drops

Into their mother's bosom, sweet and soft,
 Nature's pure tears which have no bitterness;— 50
 Around the cradles of the birds aloft

They spread themselves into the loveliness
 Of fan-like leaves, and over pallid flowers
 Hang like moist clouds:—or, where high branches kiss,

Make a green space among the silent bowers, 55
 Like a vast fane in a metropolis,
 Surrounded by the columns and the towers

All overwrought with branch-like trceries
 In which there is religion—and the mute
 Persuasion of unkindled melodies, 60

Odours and gleams and murmurs, which the lute
 Of the blind pilot-spirit of the blast
 Stirs as it sails, now grave and now acute,

Wakening the leaves and waves, ere it has passed
 To such brief unison as on the brain 65

One tone, which never can recur, has cast,
One accent never to return again.

The world is full of Woodmen who expel
Love's gentle Dryads from the haunts of life,
And vex the nightingales in every dell.

70

MARENGHI¹

[Published in part (stanzas vii-xv) by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824; stanzas i-xxviii by W. M. Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870. The Boscombe MS.—evidently a first draft—from which (through Dr. Garnett) Rossetti derived the text of 1870 is now at the Bodleian, and has recently been collated by Mr. C. D. Locock, to whom the enlarged and emended text here printed is owing. The substitution, in title and text, of *Marengi* for *Mazenghi* (1824) is due to Rossetti. Here as elsewhere in the footnotes *B.* = the Bodleian MS.]

I

LET those who pine in pride or in revenge,
Or think that ill for ill should be repaid,
Who barter wrong for wrong, until the exchange
Ruins the merchants of such thriftless trade,
Visit the tower of Vado, and unlearn
Such bitter faith beside Marengi's urn.

5

II

A massy tower yet overhangs the town,
A scattered group of ruined dwellings now

III

Another scene ere wise Etruria knew
Its second ruin through internal strife,
And tyrants through the breach of discord threw
The chain which binds and kills. As death to life,
As winter to fair flowers (though some be poison)
So Monarchy succeeds to Freedom's foison.

10

IV

In Pisa's church a cup of sculptured gold
Was brimming with the blood of feuds forsworn:
A Sacrament more holy ne'er of old
Etrurians mingled mid the shades forlorn
Of moon-illumined forests, when

15

3 Who *B.*; Or 1870. 6 Marengi's 1870; Mazenghi's *B.* 7 town 1870; sea *B.*
8 ruined 1870; squalid *B.* ('the whole line is cancelled,' Locock). 11 threw 1870; cancelled, *B.*
17 A Sacrament more *B.*; At Sacrament: more 1870. 18 mid *B.*; with 1870. 19 forests
when . . . *B.*; forests. 1870.

¹ This fragment refers to an event told in Sismondi's *Histoire des Républiques Italiennes*, which occurred during the war when Florence finally subdued Pisa, and reduced it to a province.—[MRS. SHELLEY'S NOTE, 1824.]

V

And reconciling factions wet their lips 20
 With that dread wine, and swear to keep each spirit
 Undarkened by their country's last eclipse

VI

Was Florence the liberticide? that band
 Of free and glorious brothers who had planted,
 Like a green isle mid Aethiopian sand, 25
 A nation amid slaveries, disenchanted
 Of many impious faiths—wise, just—do they,
 Does Florence, gorge the sated tyrants' prey?

VII

O foster-nurse of man's abandoned glory,
 Since Athens, its great mother, sunk in splendour; 30
 Thou shadowest forth that mighty shape in story,
 As ocean its wrecked fanes, severe yet tender:—
 The light-invested angel Poesy
 Was drawn from the dim world to welcome thee.

VIII

And thou in painting didst transcribe all taught 35
 By loftiest meditations; marble knew
 The sculptor's fearless soul—and as he wrought,
 The grace of his own power and freedom grew.
 And more than all, heroic, just, sublime,
 Thou wert among the false . . . was this thy crime? 40

IX

Yes; and on Pisa's marble walls the twine
 Of direst weeds hangs garlanded—the snake
 Inhabits its wrecked palaces;—in thine
 A beast of subtler venom now doth make
 Its lair, and sits amid their glories overthrown, 45
 And thus thy victim's fate is as thine own.

X

The sweetest flowers are ever frail and rare,
 And love and freedom blossom but to wither;
 And good and ill like vines entangled are,
 So that their grapes may oft be plucked together;— 50
 Divide the vintage ere thou drink, then make
 Thy heart rejoice for dead Marengi's sake.

23, 24 that band Of free and glorious brothers who had 1870; omitted, B. 25 a 1870;
 one B. 27 wise, just—do they 1870; omitted, B. 28 Does 1870; Doth B. prey 1870; spoil B.
 33 angel 1824; Herald [?] B. 34 to welcome thee 1824; cancelled for . . . by thee B.
 42 direst 1824; Desert B. 45 sits amid 1824; amid cancelled for soils (?) B.

x a

[Albert] Marengi was a Florentine;
 If he had wealth, or children, or a wife
 Or friends, [or farm] or cherished thoughts which twine
 The sights and sounds of home with life's own life
 Of these he was despoiled and Florence sent

55

XI

No record of his crime remains in story,
 But if the morning bright as evening shone,
 It was some high and holy deed, by glory
 Pursued into forgetfulness, which won
 From the blind crowd he made secure and free
 The patriot's meed, toil, death, and infamy.

60

XII

For when by sound of trumpet was declared
 A price upon his life, and there was set
 A penalty of blood on all who shared
 So much of water with him as might wet
 His lips, which speech divided not—he went
 Alone, as you may guess, to banishment.

65

XIII

Amid the mountains, like a hunted beast,
 He hid himself, and hunger, toil, and cold,
 Month after month endured; it was a feast
 Whene'er he found those globes of deep-red gold
 Which in the woods the strawberry-tree doth bear,
 Suspended in their emerald atmosphere.

70

75

XIV

And in the roofless huts of vast morasses,
 Deserted by the fever-stricken serf,
 All overgrown with reeds and long rank grasses,
 And hillocks heaped of moss-inwoven turf,
 And where the huge and speckled aloe made,
 Rooted in stones, a broad and pointed shade,—

80

XV

He housed himself. There is a point of strand
 Near Vado's tower and town; and on one side
 The treacherous marsh divides it from the land,
 Shadowed by pine and ilex forests wide,
 And on the other, creeps eternally,
 Through muddy weeds, the shallow sullen sea.

85

53-57 Albert . . . sent B.; omitted 1824, 1870. Albert cancelled B.: Pietro is the correct name.
 53 Marengi] Mazenghi B. 55 farm doubtful: perh. fame (Locock). 62 he 1824; thus B.
 70 Amid the mountains 1824; Mid desert mountains [?] B. 71 toil, and cold] cold and toil
 edd. 1824, 1839.

XVI

Here the earth's breath is pestilence, and few
 But things whose nature is at war with life—
 Snakes and ill worms—endure its mortal dew. 90
 The trophies of the clime's victorious strife—
 And ringed horns which the buffalo did wear,
 And the wolf's dark gray scalp who tracked him there.

XVII

And at the utmost point . . . stood there
 The relics of a reed-inwoven cot, 95
 Thatched with broad flags. An outlawed murderer
 Had lived seven days there: the pursuit was hot
 When he was cold. The birds that were his grave
 Fell dead after their feast in Vado's wave.

XVIII

There must have burned within Marenghi's breast 100
 That fire, more warm and bright than life and hope,
 (Which to the martyr makes his dungeon
 More joyous than free heaven's majestic cope
 To his oppressor), warring with decay,—
 Or he could ne'er have lived years, day by day. 105

XIX

Nor was his state so lone as you might think.
 He had tamed every newt and snake and toad,
 And every seagull which sailed down to drink
 Those freshes ere the death-mist went abroad.
 And each one, with peculiar talk and play, 110
 Wiled, not untaught, his silent time away.

XX

And the marsh-meteors, like tame beasts, at night
 Came licking with blue tongues his veined feet;
 And he would watch them, as, like spirits bright,
 In many entangled figures quaint and sweet 115
 To some enchanted music they would dance—
 Until they vanished at the first moon-glance.

XXI

He mocked the stars by grouping on each weed
 The summer dew-globes in the golden dawn;
 And, ere the hoar-frost languished, he could read 120
 Its pictured path, as on bare spots of lawn

92, 93 And . . . there B. (see Editor's Note); White bones, and locks of dun and yellow hair, And
 inged horns which buffaloes did wear— 1870. 94 at the utmost point 1870; cancelled for when
 where?) B. 95 reed B.; weed 1870. 99 after B.; upon 1870. 100 burned
 within Marenghi's breast B.; lived within Marenghi's heart 1870. 101 and B.; or 1870.
 03 free B.; the 1870. 109 freshes B.; omitted, 1870. 118 by 1870; with B.
 19 dew-globes B.; dewdrops 1870. 120 languished B.; vanished 1870. 121 path, as
 on [bare] B.; footprints, as on 1870.

Its delicate brief touch in silver weaves
The likeness of the wood's remembered leaves.

XXII

And many a fresh Spring morn would he awaken—
While yet the unrisen sun made glow, like iron
Quivering in crimson fire, the peaks unshaken
Of mountains and blue isles which did environ
With air-clad crags that plain of land and sea,—
And feel liberty.

125

XXIII

And in the moonless nights, when the dun ocean
Heaved underneath wide heaven, star-impearled,
Starting from dreams . . .
Communed with the immeasurable world;
And felt his life beyond his limbs dilated,
Till his mind grew like that it contemplated.

130

135

XXIV

His food was the wild fig and strawberry;
The milky pine-nuts which the autumn-blast
Shakes into the tall grass; or such small fry
As from the sea by winter-storms are cast;
And the coarse bulbs of iris-flowers he found
Knotted in clumps under the spongy ground.

140

XXV

And so were kindled powers and thoughts which made
His solitude less dark. When memory came
(For years gone by leave each a deepening shade),
His spirit basked in its internal flame,—
As, when the black storm hurries round at night,
The fisher basks beside his red firelight.

145

XXVI

Yet human hopes and cares and faiths and errors,
Like billows unawakened by the wind,
Slept in Marenghi still; but that all terrors,
Weakness, and doubt, had withered in his mind.
His couch . . .

150

XXVII

And, when he saw beneath the sunset's planet
A black ship walk over the crimson ocean,—
Its pennon streaming on the blasts that fan it,
Its sails and ropes all tense and without motion,

155

122 silver B.; silence 1870. 130 And in the moonless nights 1870; cancelled, B. dun B.;
dim 1870. 131 Heaved 1870; cancelled, B. wide B., the 1870. star-impearled B.;
omitted, 1870. 132 Starting from dreams 1870; cancelled for He B. 137 autumn
B.; autumnal 1870. 138 or B.; and 1870. 155 pennon B.; pennons 1870.

Like the dark ghost of the unburied even
Striding athwart the orange-coloured heaven,—

XXVIII

The thought of his own kind who made the soul
Which sped that wingèd shape through night and day,— 160
The thought of his own country . . .

SONNET

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. Our text is that
of the *Poetical Works*, 1839.]

LIFT not the painted veil which those who live
Call Life: though unreal shapes be pictured there,
And it but mimic all we would believe
With colours idly spread,—behind, lurk Fear
And Hope, twin Destinies; who ever weave 5
Their shadows, o'er the chasm, sightless and drear.
I knew one who had lifted it—he sought,
For his lost heart was tender, things to love,
But found them not, alas! nor was there aught
The world contains, the which he could approve. 10
Through the unheeding many he did move,
A splendour among shadows, a bright blot
Upon this gloomy scene, a Spirit that strove
For truth, and like the Preacher found it not.

FRAGMENT: TO BYRON

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

O MIGHTY mind, in whose deep stream this age
Shakes like a reed in the unheeding storm,
Why dost thou curb not thine own sacred rage?

FRAGMENT: APOSTROPHE TO SILENCE

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862. A transcript by Mrs. Shelley,
given to Charles Cowden Clarke, presents one or two variants.]

SILENCE! Oh, well are Death and Sleep and Thou
Three brethren named, the guardians gloomy-winged
Of one abyss, where life, and truth, and joy
Are swallowed up—yet spare me, Spirit, pity me,
Until the sounds I hear become my soul, 5
And it has left these faint and weary limbs,
To track along the lapses of the air
This wandering melody until it rests
Among lone mountains in some . . .

158 athwart *B.*; across 1870. Sonnet.—6 Their . . . drear 1839; The shadows, which
the world calls substance, there 1824. 7 who had lifted 1839; who lifted 1824. Apostrophe.—4
Spirit 1862; O Spirit *C.C.C. MS.* 8 This wandering melody 1862; These wandering melodies
. . . *C.C.C. MS.*

FRAGMENT: THE LAKE'S MARGIN

[Published by W. M. Rossetti, 1870.]

THE fierce beasts of the woods and wildernesses
Track not the steps of him who drinks of it;
For the light breezes, which for ever fleet
Around its margin, heap the sand thereon.

FRAGMENT: 'MY HEAD IS WILD WITH WEEPING'

[Published by W. M. Rossetti, 1870.]

My head is wild with weeping for a grief
Which is the shadow of a gentle mind.
I walk into the air (but no relief
To seek,—or haply, if I sought, to find;
It came unsought);—to wonder that a chief
Among men's spirits should be cold and blind.

5

FRAGMENT: THE VINE-SHROUD

[Published by W. M. Rossetti, 1870.]

LOURISHING vine, whose kindling clusters glow
Beneath the autumnal sun, none taste of thee;
For thou dost shroud a ruin, and below
The rotting bones of dead antiquity.

NOTE ON POEMS OF 1818, BY MRS. SHELLEY

WE often hear of persons disappointed by a first visit to Italy. This was not Shelley's case. The aspect of its nature, its sunny sky, its majestic storms, of the luxuriant vegetation of the country, and the noble marble-built cities, enchanted him. The sight of the works of art was full enjoyment and wonder. He had not studied pictures or statues before; he now did so with the eye of taste, that referred not to the rules of schools, but to those of Nature and truth. The first entrance to Rome opened to him a scene of remains of antique grandeur that far surpassed his expectations; and the unspeakable beauty of Naples and its environs added to the impression he received of the transcendent and glorious beauty of Italy.

Our winter was spent at Naples. Here he wrote the fragments of *Marengi* and *The Woodman and the Nightingale*, which he afterwards threw aside. At this time, Shelley suffered greatly in health. He put himself under the care of a medical man, who promised great things, and made him endure severe bodily pain, without any good results. Constant and poignant physical suffering exhausted him; and though he preserved the appearance of cheerfulness, and often greatly enjoyed our wanderings in the environs of Naples, and our excursions on its sunny sea, yet many hours were passed when his thoughts, shadowed by illness, became gloomy,—and then he escaped to solitude, and in verses, which he hid from fear of wounding me, poured forth morbid but too natural bursts of discontent and sadness. One looks back with unspeakable regret and gnawing remorse to such periods; fancying that, had one been more alive to the nature of his feelings, and more attentive to soothe them, such would not have existed. And yet, enjoying as he appeared to do every sight or influence of earth or sky, it was difficult to

imagine that any melancholy he showed was aught but the effect of the constant pain to which he was a martyr.

We lived in utter solitude. And such is often not the nurse of cheerfulness; for then, at least with those who have been exposed to adversity, the mind broods over its sorrows too intently; while the society of the enlightened, the witty, and the wise, enables us to forget ourselves by making us the sharers of the thoughts of others, which is a portion of the philosophy of happiness. Shelley never liked society in numbers,—it harassed and wearied him; but neither did he like loneliness, and usually, when alone, sheltered himself against memory and reflection in a book. But, with one or two whom he loved, he gave way to wild and joyous spirits, or in more serious conversation expounded his opinions with vivacity and eloquence. If an argument arose, no man ever argued better. He was clear, logical, and earnest, in supporting his own views; attentive, patient, and impartial, while listening to those on the adverse side. Had not a wall of prejudice been raised at this time between him and his countrymen, how many would have sought the acquaintance of one whom to know was to love and to revere! How many of the more enlightened of his contemporaries have since regretted that they did not seek him! how very few knew his worth while he lived! and, of those few, several were withheld by timidity or envy from declaring their sense of it. But no man was ever more enthusiastically loved—more looked up to, as one superior to his fellows in intellectual endowments and moral worth, by the few who knew him well, and had sufficient nobleness of soul to appreciate his superiority. His excellence is now acknowledged; but, even while admitted, not duly appreciated. For who, except those who were acquainted with him, can imagine his unwearied benevolence, his generosity, his systematic forbearance? And still less is his vast superiority in intellectual attainments sufficiently understood—his sagacity, his clear understanding, his learning, his prodigious memory. All these, as displayed in conversation, were known to few while he lived, and are now silent in the tomb:

‘Ahi orbo mondo ingrato!
Gran cagion hai di dover pianger meco;
Chè quel ben ch’era in te, perduto’ hai seco.’

POEMS WRITTEN IN 1819

LINES WRITTEN DURING THE CASTLEREAGH ADMINISTRATION

[Published by Medwin, *The Athenæum*, Dec. 8, 1832; reprinted, *P. W.*, 1839. There is a transcript amongst the Harvard MSS., and another in the possession of Mr. C. W. Frederickson of Brooklyn. Variants from these two sources are given by Professor Woodberry, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S., Centenary Edition*, 1893, vol. iii, pp. 225, 226. The transcripts are referred to in our footnotes as *Harvard* and *Fred.* respectively.]

I

CORPSES are cold in the tomb;
Stones on the pavement are dumb;
Abortions are dead in the womb,
And their mothers look pale—like the death-white shore
Of Albion, free no more.

4 death-white *Harvard*, *Fred.*; white 1832, 1839.

II

Her sons are as stones in the way—
 They are masses of senseless clay—
 They are trodden, and move not away,—
 The abortion with which *she* travaileth
 Is Liberty, smitten to death.

10

III

Then trample and dance, thou Oppressor!
 For thy victim is no redresser;
 Thou art sole lord and possessor
 Of her corpses, and clods, and abortions—they pave
 Thy path to the grave.

15

IV

Hearest thou the festival din
 Of Death, and Destruction, and Sin,
 And Wealth crying *Havoc!* within?
 'Tis the bacchanal triumph that makes Truth dumb,
 Thine Epithalamium.

20

V

Ay, marry thy ghastly wife!
 Let Fear and Disquiet and Strife
 Spread thy couch in the chamber of Life!
 Marry Ruin, thou Tyrant! and Hell be thy guide
 To the bed of the bride!

25

SONG TO THE MEN OF ENGLAND

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Poetical Works*, 1839, 1st ed.]

I

MEN of England, wherefore plough
 For the lords who lay ye low?
 Wherefore weave with toil and care
 The rich robes your tyrants wear?

II

Wherefore feed, and clothe, and save, 5
 From the cradle to the grave,
 Those ungrateful drones who would
 Drain your sweat—nay, drink your
 blood?

III

Wherefore, Bees of England, forge
 Many a weapon, chain, and scourge, 10

That these stingless drones may spoil
 The forced produce of your toil?

IV

Have ye leisure, comfort, calm,
 Shelter, food, love's gentle balm?
 Or what is it ye buy so dear 15
 With your pain and with your fear?

V

The seed ye sow, another reaps;
 The wealth ye find, another keeps;
 The robes ye weave, another wears;
 The arms ye forge, another bears. 20

16 festival *Harvard, Fred.*, 1839; festal 1832.
 22 Disquiet *Harvard, Fred.*, 1839; Disgust 1832.
 25 the bride *Harvard, Fred.* 1839; thy bride 1832.

19 that *Fred.*; which *Harvard*, 1832.
 24 Hell *Fred.*; God *Harvard*, 1832, 1839.

VI

Sow seed,—but let no tyrant reap;
Find wealth,—let no impostor heap;
Weave robes,—let not the idle wear;
Forge arms,—in your defence to
bear.

VII

Shrink to your cellars, holes, and
cells; 25
In halls ye deck another dwells.

Why shake the chains ye wrought?
Ye see
The steel ye tempered glance on ye.

VIII

With plough and spade, and hoe and
loom,
Trace your grave, and build your
tomb, 30
And weave your winding-sheet, till fair
England be your sepulchre.

SIMILES FOR TWO POLITICAL CHARACTERS OF 1819

[Published by Medwin, *The Athenæum*, Aug. 25, 1832; reprinted by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839. Out title is that of 1839, 2nd ed. The poem is found amongst the Harvard MSS., headed *To S—th and C—gh.*]

I

As from an ancestral oak
Two empty ravens sound their
clarion,
Yell by yell, and croak by croak,
When they scent the noonday smoke
Of fresh human carrion:— 5

II

As two gibbering night-birds flit
From their bowers of deadly yew
Through the night to frighten it,
When the moon is in a fit,
And the stars are none, or few:— 10

III

As a shark and dog-fish wait
Under an Atlantic isle,
For the negro-ship, whose freight
Is the theme of their debate,
Wrinkling their red gills the
while— 15

IV

Are ye, two vultures sick for battle,
Two scorpions under one wet stone,
Two bloodless wolves whose dry
throats rattle,
Two crows perched on the murrained
cattle,
Two vipers tangled into one. 20

FRAGMENT: TO THE PEOPLE OF ENGLAND

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

PEOPLE of England, ye who toil and groan,
Who reap the harvests which are not your own,
Who weave the clothes which your oppressors wear,
And for your own take the inclement air;
Who build warm houses . . . 5
And are like gods who give them all they have,
And nurse them from the cradle to the grave . . .
.

Similes.—7 yew 1832; hue 1830

FRAGMENT: 'WHAT MEN GAIN FAIRLY'¹[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.]

WHAT men gain fairly—that they should possess,
 And children may inherit idleness,
 From him who earns it—This is understood;
 Private injustice may be general good.
 But he who gains by base and armèd wrong,
 Or guilty fraud, or base compliances,
 May be despoiled; even as a stolen dress
 Is stripped from a convicted thief, and he
 Left in the nakedness of infamy.

A NEW NATIONAL ANTHEM

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.]

I	IV
<p>God prosper, speed, and save, God raise from England's grave Her murdered Queen! Pave with swift victory The steps of Liberty, Whom Britons own to be Immortal Queen.</p>	<p>'Wilder her enemies In their own dark disguise,— God save our Queen! All earthly things that dare Her sacred name to bear, Strip them, as kings are, bare; God save the Queen!</p>
II	V
<p>See, she comes throned on high, On swift Eternity! God save the Queen! Millions on millions wait, Firm, rapid, and elate, On her majestic state! God save the Queen!</p>	<p>Be her eternal throne Built in our hearts alone— God save the Queen! Let the oppressor hold Canopied seats of gold; She sits enthroned of old O'er our hearts Queen.</p>
III	VI
<p>She is Thine own pure soul Moulding the mighty whole,— God save the Queen! She is Thine own deep love Rained down from Heaven above,— Wherever she rest or move, God save our Queen!</p>	<p>Lips touched by seraphim Breathe out the choral hymn 'God save the Queen!' Sweet as if angels sang, Loud as that trumpet's clang Wakening the world's dead gang,— God save the Queen!</p>

SONNET: ENGLAND IN 1819

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.]

AN old, mad, blind, despised, and dying king,—
 Princes, the dregs of their dull race, who flow
 Through public scorn,—mud from a muddy spring,—

¹ Perhaps connected with that immediately preceding (Forman).—ED.

Rulers who neither see, nor feel, nor know,
 But leech-like to their fainting country cling,
 Till they drop, blind in blood, without a blow,—
 A people starved and stabbed in the untilled field,—
 An army, which liberticide and prey
 Makes as a two-edged sword to all who wield,—
 Golden and sanguine laws which tempt and slay;
 Religion Christless, Godless—a book sealed;
 A Senate,—Time's worst statute unrepealed,—
 Are graves, from which a glorious Phantom may
 Burst, to illumine our tempestuous day.

AN ODE

WRITTEN OCTOBER, 1819, BEFORE THE SPANIARDS HAD
 RECOVERED THEIR LIBERTY

[Published with *Prometheus Unbound*, 1820.]

ARISE, arise, arise!

There is blood on the earth that denies ye bread;
 Be your wounds like eyes
 To weep for the dead, the dead, the dead.
 What other grief were it just to pay?
 Your sons, your wives, your brethren, were they;
 Who said they were slain on the battle day?

Awaken, awaken, awaken!

The slave and the tyrant are twin-born foes;
 Be the cold chains shaken
 To the dust where your kindred repose, repose:
 Their bones in the grave will start and move,
 When they hear the voices of those they love,
 Most loud in the holy combat above.

Wave, wave high the banner!

When Freedom is riding to conquest by:
 Though the slaves that fan her
 Be Famine and Toil, giving sigh for sigh.
 And ye who attend her imperial car,
 Lift not your hands in the banded war,
 But in her defence whose children ye are.

Glory, glory, glory,

To those who have greatly suffered and done!
 Never name in story
 Was greater than that which ye shall have won.
 Conquerors have conquered their foes alone,
 Whose revenge, pride, and power they have overthrown:
 Ride ye, more victorious, over your own.

Bind, bind every brow
 With crownals of violet, ivy, and pine:
 Hide the blood-stains now
 With hues which sweet Nature has made divine:
 Green strength, azure hope, and eternity—
 But let not the pansy among them be;
 Ye were injured, and that means memory.

30

35

CANCELLED STANZA

[Published in *The Times* (Rossetti).]

GATHER, O gather,
 Foeman and friend in love and peace!
 Waves sleep together
 When the blasts that called them to battle, cease.
 For fangless Power grown tame and mild
 Is at play with Freedom's fearless child—
 The dove and the serpent reconciled!

5

ODE TO HEAVEN

[Published with *Prometheus Unbound*, 1820. Dated 'Florence, December, 1819' in Harvard MS. (Woodberry). A transcript exists amongst the Shelley MSS. at the Bodleian Library. See Mr. C. D. Locock's *Examination*, &c., p. 39.]

CHORUS OF SPIRITS

First Spirit.

PALACE-ROOF of cloudless nights!
 Paradise of golden lights!
 Deep, immeasurable, vast,
 Which art now, and which wert then
 Of the Present and the Past, 5
 Of the eternal Where and When,
 Presence-chamber, temple, home,
 Ever-canopying dome,
 Of acts and ages yet to come!
 Glorious shapes have life in thee, 10
 Earth, and all earth's company;
 Living globes which ever throng
 Thy deep chasms and wildernesses;
 And green worlds that glide along;
 And swift stars with flashing tresses;
 And icy moons most cold and
 bright, 16
 And mighty suns beyond the night,
 Atoms of intensest light.

Even thy name is as a god,
 Heaven! for thou art the abode 20

Of that Power which is the glass
 Wherein man his nature sees.
 Generations as they pass
 Worship thee with bended knees.
 Their unremaining gods and they 25
 Like a river roll away:
 Thou remainest such—alway!—

Second Spirit.

Thou art but the mind's first chamber,
 Round which its young fancies clamber,
 Like weak insects in a cave, 30
 Lighted up by stalactites;
 But the portal of the grave,
 Where a world of new delights
 Will make thy best glories seem
 But a dim and noonday gleam 35
 From the shadow of a dream!

Third Spirit.

Peace! the abyss is wreathed with
 scorn
 At your presumption, atom-born!
 What is Heaven? and what are ye
 Who its brief expanse inherit? 40

What are suns and spheres which flee With the instinct of that Spirit Of which ye are but a part? Drops which Nature's mighty heart Drives through thinnest veins! De- part! 45	Some eyed flower whose young leaves waken On an unimagined world: Constellated suns unshaken, 50 Orbits measureless, are furled In that frail and fading sphere, With ten millions gathered there, To tremble, gleam, and disappear.
What is Heaven? a globe of dew, Filling in the morning new	

CANCELLED FRAGMENTS OF THE ODE TO HEAVEN

[Published by Mr. C. D. Locock, *Examination*, &c., 1903.]

THE [living frame which sustains my soul] Is [sinking beneath the fierce control] Down through the lampless deep of song I am drawn and driven along— When a Nation screams aloud 5	Like an eagle from the cloud When a When the night Watch the look askance and old— See neglect, and falsehood fold. . . . 10
---	--

ODE TO THE WEST WIND¹[Published with *Prometheus Unbound*, 1820.]

I

O WILD West Wind, thou breath of Autumn's being,
 Thou, from whose unseen presence the leaves dead
 Are driven, like ghosts from an enchanter fleeing,

Yellow, and black, and pale, and hectic red,
 Pestilence-stricken multitudes: O thou, 5
 Who chariotest to their dark wintry bed

The wingèd seeds, where they lie cold and low,
 Each like a corpse within its grave, until
 Thine azure sister of the Spring shall blow

Her clarion o'er the dreaming earth, and fill,
 (Driving sweet buds like flocks to feed in air) 10
 With living hues and odours plain and hill:

Wild Spirit, which art moving everywhere;
 Destroyer and preserver; hear, oh, hear!

¹ This poem was conceived and chiefly written in a wood that skirts the Arno, near Florence, and on a day when that tempestuous wind, whose temperature is at once mild and animating, was collecting the vapours which pour down the autumnal rains. They began, as I foresaw, at sunset with a violent tempest of hail and rain, attended by that magnificent thunder and lightning peculiar to the Cisalpine regions.

The phenomenon alluded to at the conclusion of the third stanza is well known to naturalists. The vegetation at the bottom of the sea, of rivers, and of lakes, sympathizes with that of the land in the change of seasons, and is consequently influenced by the winds which announce it.—SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

II

Thou on whose stream, mid the steep sky's commotion,
 Loose clouds like earth's decaying leaves are shed,
 Shook from the tangled boughs of Heaven and Ocean,

Angels of rain and lightning: there are spread
 On the blue surface of thine aëry surge,
 Like the bright hair uplifted from the head

Of some fierce Maenad, even from the dim verge
 Of the horizon to the zenith's height,
 The locks of the approaching storm. Thou dirge

Of the dying year, to which this closing night
 Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre,
 Vaulted with all thy congregated might

Of vapours, from whose solid atmosphere
 Black rain, and fire, and hail will burst: oh, hear!

III

Thou who didst waken from his summer dreams
 The blue Mediterranean, where he lay,
 Lulled by the coil of his crystalline streams,

Beside a pumice isle in Baiae's bay,
 And saw in sleep old palaces and towers
 Quivering within the wave's intenser day,

All overgrown with azure moss and flowers
 So sweet, the sense faints picturing them! Thou
 For whose path the Atlantic's level powers

Cleave themselves into chasms, while far below
 The sea-blooms and the oozy woods which wear
 The sapless foliage of the ocean, know

Thy voice, and suddenly grow gray with fear,
 And tremble and despoil themselves: oh, hear!

IV

If I were a dead leaf thou mightest bear;
 If I were a swift cloud to fly with thee;
 A wave to pant beneath thy power, and share

The impulse of thy strength, only less free
 Than thou, O uncontrollable! If even
 I were as in my boyhood, and could be

The comrade of thy wanderings over Heaven,
As then, when to outstrip thy skiey speed
Scarce seemed a vision ; I would ne'er have striven

As thus with thee in prayer in my sore need.
Oh, lift me as a wave, a leaf, a cloud!
I fall upon the thorns of life! I bleed!

A heavy weight of hours has chained and bowed
One too like thee: tameless, and swift, and proud.

V

Make me thy lyre, even as the forest is:
What if my leaves are falling like its own!
The tumult of thy mighty harmonies

Will take from both a deep, autumnal tone,
Sweet though in sadness. Be thou, Spirit fierce,
My spirit! Be thou me, impetuous one!

60

Drive my dead thoughts over the universe
Like withered leaves to quicken a new birth!
And, by the incantation of this verse,

Scatter, as from an unextinguished hearth
Ashes and sparks, my words among mankind!
Be through my lips to unawakened earth

The trumpet of a prophecy! O, Wind,
If Winter comes, can Spring be far behind?

AN EXHORTATION

[Published with *Prometheus Unbound*, 1820. Dated 'Pisa, April, 1820' in Harvard MS. (Woodberry), but assigned by Mrs. Shelley to 1819.]

CHAMELEONS feed on light and air :	Where love is not, poets do :	15
Poets' food is love and fame :	Fame is love disguised : if few	
Find in this wide world of care	Find either, never think it strange	
Poets could but find the same	That poets range.	
With as little toil as they,	Yet dare not stain with wealth or	
Would they ever change their hue	power	
As the light chameleons do,	A poet's free and heavenly mind :	20
Suiting it to every ray	If bright chameleons should devour	
Twenty times a day ?	Any food but beams and wind,	
	They would grow as earthly soon	
Poets are on this cold earth,	As their brother lizards are.	
As chameleons might be,	Children of a sunnier star,	25
Hidden from their early birth	Spirits from beyond the moon,	
In a cave beneath the sea ;	Oh, refuse the boon !	
Where light is, chameleons change :		

THE INDIAN SERENADE

[Published, with the title, *Song written for an Indian Air*, in *The Liberal*, ii, 1822. Reprinted (*Lines to an Indian Air*) by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. The poem is included in the Harvard MS. book, and there is a description by Robert Browning of an autograph copy presenting some variations from the text of 1824. See Leigh Hunt's *Correspondence*, ii, pp. 264-8.]

I

I ARISE from dreams of thee
In the first sweet sleep of night.
When the winds are breathing low,
And the stars are shining bright :
I arise from dreams of thee, 5
And a spirit in my feet
Hath led me—who knows how ?
To thy chamber window, Sweet !

II

The wandering airs they faint
On the dark, the silent stream— 10
The Champak odours fail
Like sweet thoughts in a dream ;
The nightingale's complaint,
It dies upon her heart ;—

As I must on thine,
Oh, beloved as thou art !

III

Oh lift me from the grass !
I die ! I faint ! I fail !
Let thy love in kisses rain
On my lips and eyelids pale. 20
My cheek is cold and white, alas !
My heart beats loud and fast ;—
Oh ! press it to thine own again,
Where it will break at last.

CANCELLED PASSAGE

[Published by W. M. Rossetti, *Complete P. W.*, 1870.]

O PILLOW cold and wet with tears !
Thou breathest sleep no more !

TO SOPHIA [MISS STACEY]

[Published by W. M. Rossetti, *Complete P. W.*, 1870.]

I

THOU art fair, and few are fairer
Of the Nymphs of earth or ocean ;
They are robes that fit the wearer—
Those soft limbs of thine, whose motion
Ever falls and shifts and glances
As the life within them dances. 5

II

Thy deep eyes, a double Planet,
Gaze the wisest into madness
With soft clear fire,—the winds that fan it
Are those thoughts of tender gladness
Which, like zephyrs on the billow, 10
Make thy gentle soul their pillow.

Indian Serenade.—3 Harvard MS. omits When. 4 shining] burning Harvard MS., 1822.
7 Hath led Browning MS., 1822 ; Has borne Harvard MS. ; Has led 1824. 11 The Champak
Harvard MS., 1822, 1824 ; And the Champak's Browning MS. 15 As I must on 1822, 1824.
As I must die on Harvard MS., 1839, 1st ed. 16 Oh, beloved Browning MS., Harvard MS.,
1839, 1st ed. ; Belovèd 1822, 1824. 23 press it to thine own Browning MS. ; press it close to
thine Harvard MS., 1824, 1839, 1st ed. ; press me to thine own, 1822.

III

If, whatever face thou paintest
 In those eyes, grows pale with pleasure,
 If the fainting soul is faintest 15
 When it hears thy harp's wild measure,
 Wonder not that when thou speakest
 Of the weak my heart is weakest.

IV

As dew beneath the wind of morning,
 As the sea which whirlwinds waken, 20
 As the birds at thunder's warning,
 As aught mute yet deeply shaken,
 As one who feels an unseen spirit
 Is my heart when thine is near it.

TO WILLIAM SHELLEY

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Works*, 1824. The fragment included in the Harvard MS. book.]

(With what truth may I say—
 Roma! Roma! Roma!
 Non è più come era prima!)

I

My lost William, thou in whom
 Some bright spirit lived, and did
 That decaying robe consume
 Which its lustre faintly hid,—
 Here its ashes find a tomb, 5
 But beneath this pyramid
 Thou art not—if a thing divine
 Like thee can die, thy funeral shrine
 Is thy mother's grief and mine.

II

Where art thou, my gentle child? 10
 Let me think thy spirit feeds,
 With its life intense and mild,
 The love of living leaves and weeds
 Among these tombs and ruins wild;—
 Let me think that through low
 seeds 15
 Of sweet flowers and sunny grass
 Into their hues and scents may pass
 A portion—

TO WILLIAM SHELLEY

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.]

Thy little footsteps on the sands
 Of a remote and lonely shore;
 The twinkling of thine infant hands,
 Where now the worm will feed no more;
 Thy mingled look of love and glee 5
 When we returned to gaze on thee—

To William Shelley.—Motto 1 may I *Harvard MS.*; I may 1824 12 With *Harvard MS.*,
Mrs. Shelley, 1847; Within 1824, 1839. 16 Of sweet *Harvard MS.*; Of the sweet 1824, 1839.

TO MARY SHELLEY

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.]

MY dearest Mary, wherefore hast thou gone,
 And left me in this dreary world alone?
 Thy form is here indeed—a lovely one—
 But thou art fled, gone down the dreary road,
 That leads to Sorrow's most obscure abode;
 Thou sittest on the hearth of pale despair,
Where
 For thine own sake I cannot follow thee.

5

TO MARY SHELLEY

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P.W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.]

THE world is dreary,
 And I am weary
 Of wandering on without thee, Mary;
 A joy was erewhile
 In thy voice and thy smile,
 And 'tis gone, when I should be gone too, Mary.

5

ON THE MEDUSA OF LEONARDO DA VINCI IN THE
FLORENTINE GALLERY[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

It lieth, gazing on the midnight sky,
 Upon the cloudy mountain-peak supine;
 Below, far lands are seen tremblingly;
 Its horror and its beauty are divine.
 Upon its lips and eyelids seems to lie
 Loveliness like a shadow, from which shine,
 Fiery and lurid, struggling underneath,
 The agonies of anguish and of death.

5

II

Yet it is less the horror than the grace
 Which turns the gazer's spirit into stone,
 Whereon the lineaments of that dead face
 Are graven, till the characters be grown
 Into itself, and thought no more can trace;
 'Tis the melodious hue of beauty thrown
 Athwart the darkness and the glare of pain,
 Which humanize and harmonize the strain.

10

15

On the Medusa.—5 seems 1839; seem 1824.

6 shine] shrine 1824, 1839.

III

And from its head as from one body grow,
 As grass out of a watery rock,
 Hairs which are vipers, and they curl and flow
 And their long tangles in each other lock, 20
 And with unending involutions show
 Their mailèd radiance, as it were to mock
 The torture and the death within, and saw
 The solid air with many a ragged jaw.

IV

And, from a stone beside, a poisonous eft 25
 Peeps idly into those Gorgonian eyes;
 Whilst in the air a ghastly bat, bereft
 Of sense, has flitted with a mad surprise
 Out of the cave this hideous light had cleft,
 And he comes hastening like a moth that hies 30
 After a taper; and the midnight sky
 Flares, a light more dread than obscurity.

V

'Tis the tempestuous loveliness of terror;
 For from the serpents gleams a brazen glare
 Kindled by that inextricable error, 35
 Which makes a thrilling vapour of the air
 Become a and ever-shifting mirror
 Of all the beauty and the terror there—
 A woman's countenance, with serpent-locks,
 Gazing in death on Heaven from those wet rocks. 40

LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY

[Published by Leigh Hunt, *The Indicator*, December 22, 1819. Reprinted by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. Included in the Harvard MS. book, where it is headed *An Anacreontic*, and dated 'January, 1820.' Written by Shelley in a copy of Hunt's *Literary Pocket-Book*, 1819, and presented to Sophia Stacey, December 29, 1820.]

I

THE fountains mingle with the river
 And the rivers with the Ocean,
 The winds of Heaven mix for ever
 With a sweet emotion;
 Nothing in the world is single; 5
 All things by a law divine
 In one spirit meet and mingle.
 Why not I with thine?—

II

See the mountains kiss high Heaven
 And the waves clasp one another; 10
 No sister-flower would be forgiven
 If it disdained its brother;
 And the sunlight clasps the earth 5
 And the moonbeams kiss the sea:
 What is all this sweet work worth 15
 If thou kiss not me?

26 those 1824; these 1839.

Love's Philosophy.—3 mix for ever 1819, *Stacey MS.*; meet

together, *Harvard MS.*

7 In one spirit meet and *Stacey MS.*; In one another's being 1819,

Harvard MS.

11 No sister 1824, *Harvard and Stacey MSS.*; No leaf or 1819.

12 dis-

disdained its 1824, *Harvard and Stacey MSS.*; disdained to kiss its 1819.

15 is all this sweet

work *Stacey MS.*; were these examples *Harvard MS.*; are all these kissings, 1819, 1824.

FRAGMENT: 'FOLLOW TO THE DEEP WOOD'S WEEDS'

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

FOLLOW to the deep wood's weeds, Follow to the wild-briar dingle, Where we seek to intermingle, And the violet tells her tale	To the odour-scented gale, For they two have enough to do Of such work as I and you.	5
--	--	---

THE BIRTH OF PLEASURE

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

At the creation of the Earth Pleasure, that divinest birth, From the soil of Heaven did rise, Wrapped in sweet wild melodies— Like an exhalation wreathing To the sound of air low-breathing Through Aeolian pines, which make	A shade and shelter to the lake Whence it rises soft and slow; Her life-breathing [limbs] did flow In the harmony divine Of an ever-lengthening line Which enwrapped her perfect form With a beauty clear and warm.	10 5
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FRAGMENT: LOVE THE UNIVERSE TO-DAY

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.]

AND who feels discord now or sorrow?
 Love is the universe to-day—
 These are the slaves of dim to-morrow,
 Darkening Life's labyrinthine way.

FRAGMENT: 'A GENTLE STORY OF TWO LOVERS
YOUNG'[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.]

A GENTLE story of two lovers young,
 Who met in innocence and died in sorrow,
 And of one selfish heart, whose rancour clung
 Like curses on them; are ye slow to borrow
 The lore of truth from such a tale?
 Or in this world's deserted vale,
 Do ye not see a star of gladness
 Pierce the shadows of its sadness,—
 When ye are cold, that love is a light sent
 From Heaven, which none shall quench, to cheer the innocent?

FRAGMENT: LOVE'S TENDER ATMOSPHERE

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.]

THERE is a warm and gentle atmosphere
 About the form of one we love, and thus
 As in a tender mist our spirits are
 Wrapped in the of that which is to us
 The health of life's own life—

FRAGMENT: WEDDED SOULS

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

I AM as a spirit who has dwelt
 Within his heart of hearts, and I have felt
 His feelings, and have thought his thoughts, and known
 The inmost converse of his soul, the tone
 Unheard but in the silence of his blood, 5
 When all the pulses in their multitude
 Image the trembling calm of summer seas.
 I have unlocked the golden melodies
 Of his deep soul, as with a master-key,
 And loosened them and bathed myself therein— 10
 Even as an eagle in a thunder-mist
 Clothing his wings with lightning.

FRAGMENT: 'IS IT THAT IN SOME BRIGHTER
SPHERE'[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

Is it that in some brighter sphere We part from friends we meet with here? Or do we see the Future pass Over the Present's dusky glass?	Or what is that that makes us seem 5 To patch up fragments of a dream, Part of which comes true, and part Beats and trembles in the heart?
---	---

FRAGMENT: SUFFICIENT UNTO THE DAY

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

Is not to-day enough? Why do I peer
 Into the darkness of the day to come?
 Is not to-morrow even as yesterday?
 And will the day that follows change thy doom?
 Few flowers grow upon thy wintry way; 5
 And who waits for thee in that cheerless home
 Whence thou hast fled, whither thou must return
 Charged with the load that makes thee faint and mourn?

FRAGMENT: 'YE GENTLE VISITATIONS OF CALM
THOUGHT'[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.]

YE gentle visitations of calm thought—
 Moods like the memories of happier earth,
 Which come arrayed in thoughts of little worth,
 Like stars in clouds by the weak winds enwrought,—
 But that the clouds depart and stars remain, 5
 While they remain, and ye, alas, depart!

FRAGMENT: MUSIC AND SWEET POETRY

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.]

How sweet it is to sit and read the tales
 Of mighty poets and to hear the while
 Sweet music, which when the attention fails
 Fills the dim pause —

FRAGMENT: THE SEPULCHRE OF MEMORY

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.]

AND where is truth? On tombs? for such to thee
 Has been my heart—and thy dead memory
 Has lain from childhood, many a changeful year,
 Unchangingly preserved and buried there.

FRAGMENT: 'WHEN A LOVER CLASPS HIS FAIREST'

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.]

I

WHEN a lover clasps his fairest,
 Then be our dread sport the rarest.
 Their caresses were like the chaff
 In the tempest, and be our laugh
 His despair—her epitaph!

5

II

When a mother clasps her child,
 Watch till dusty Death has piled
 His cold ashes on the clay;
 She has loved it many a day—
 She remains,—it fades away.

10

FRAGMENT: 'WAKE THE SERPENT NOT'

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.]

WAKE the serpent not—lest he
 Should not know the way to go,—
 Let him crawl which yet lies sleeping
 Through the deep grass of the meadow!
 Not a bee shall hear him creeping,
 Not a may-fly shall awaken
 From its cradling blue-bell shaken,
 Not the starlight as he's sliding
 Through the grass with silent gliding.

FRAGMENT: RAIN

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.]

THE fitful alternations of the rain,
 When the chill wind, languid as with pain
 Of its own heavy moisture, here and there
 Drives through the gray and beamless atmosphere.

FRAGMENT: A TALE UNTOLD

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.]

ONE sung of thee who left the tale untold,
 Like the false dawns which perish in the bursting;
 Like empty cups of wrought and daedal gold,
 Which mock the lips with air, when they are thirsting.

FRAGMENT: TO ITALY

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

As the sunrise to the night,
 As the north wind to the clouds,
 As the earthquake's fiery flight,
 Ruining mountain solitudes,
 Everlasting Italy,
 Be those hopes and fears on thee.

5

FRAGMENT: WINE OF THE FAIRIES

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.]

I AM drunk with the honey wine
 Of the moon-unfolded eglantine,
 Which fairies catch in hyacinth bowls.
 The bats, the dormice, and the moles
 Sleep in the walls or under the sward
 Of the desolate castle yard;
 And when 'tis spilt on the summer earth
 Or its fumes arise among the dew,
 Their jocund dreams are full of mirth,
 They gibber their joy in sleep; for few
 Of the fairies bear those bowls so new!

5

10

FRAGMENT: A ROMAN'S CHAMBER

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.]

I

IN the cave which wild weeds cover
 Wait for thine aethereal lover;
 For the pallid moon is waning,
 O'er the spiral cypress hanging
 And the moon no cloud is staining.

5

II

It was once a Roman's chamber,
 Where he kept his darkest revels,
 And the wild weeds twine and clamber;
 It was then a chasm for devils.

FRAGMENT: ROME AND NATURE

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.]

ROME has fallen, ye see it lying
 Heaped in undistinguished ruin:
 Nature is alone undying.

VARIATION OF THE SONG OF THE MOON

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.]*(Prometheus Unbound, ACT IV.)*

As a violet's gentle eye	Upon its snow;	
Gazes on the azure sky	As a strain of sweetest sound	
Until its hue grows like what it beholds;	Wraps itself the wind around	10
As a gray and empty mist	Until the voiceless wind be music too;	
Lies like solid amethyst	As aught dark, vain, and dull,	5
Over the western mountain it enfolds,	Basking in what is beautiful,	
When the sunset sleeps	Is full of light and love—	

CANCELLED STANZA OF THE MASK OF ANARCHY

[Published by H. Buxton Forman, *The Mask of Anarchy (Facsimile of Shelley's MS.)*, 1887.]

(FOR WHICH STANZAS LXVIII, LXIX HAVE BEEN SUBSTITUTED.)

FROM the cities where from caves,
 Like the dead from putrid graves,
 Troops of starvelings gliding come,
 Living Tenants of a tomb.

NOTE BY MRS. SHELLEY

SHELLEY loved the People; and respected them as often more virtuous, as always more suffering, and therefore more deserving of sympathy, than the great. He believed that a clash between the two classes of society was inevitable, and he eagerly ranged himself on the people's side. He had an idea of publishing a series of poems adapted expressly to commemorate their circumstances and wrongs. He wrote a few; but, in those days of prosecution for libel, they could not be printed. They are not among the best of his productions, a writer being always shackled when he endeavours to write down to the comprehension of those who could not understand or feel a highly imaginative style; but they show his earnestness, and with what heartfelt compassion he went home to the direct point of injury—that oppression is detestable as being the parent of starvation, nakedness, and ignorance. Besides these outpourings of compassion and indignation, he had meant to adorn the cause he loved with loftier poetry of glory and triumph: such is the scope of the *Ode to the Assertors of Liberty*. He sketched also a new version of our national anthem, as addressed to Liberty.

POEMS WRITTEN IN 1820

THE SENSITIVE PLANT

[Composed at Pisa, early in 1820 (dated, 'March, 1820,' in Harvard MS.), and published, with *Prometheus Unbound*, the same year: included in the Harvard College MS. book. Reprinted in the *Poetical Works*, 1839, both edd.]

PART FIRST

A SENSITIVE Plant in a garden grew,
And the young winds fed it with silver dew,
And it opened its fan-like leaves to the light,
And closed them beneath the kisses of Night.

And the Spring arose on the garden fair, 5
Like the Spirit of Love felt everywhere;
And each flower and herb on Earth's dark breast
Rose from the dreams of its wintry rest.

But none ever trembled and panted with bliss 10
In the garden, the field, or the wilderness,
Like a doe in the noontide with love's sweet want,
As the companionless Sensitive Plant.

The snowdrop, and then the violet,
Arose from the ground with warm rain wet,
And their breath was mixed with fresh odour, sent 15
From the turf, like the voice and the instrument.

Then the pied wind-flowers and the tulip tall,
And narcissi, the fairest among them all,
Who gaze on their eyes in the stream's recess,
Till they die of their own dear loveliness; 20

And the Naiad-like lily of the vale,
Whom youth makes so fair and passion so pale
That the light of its tremulous bells is seen
Through their pavilions of tender green;

And the hyacinth purple, and white, and blue, 25
Which flung from its bells a sweet peal anew
Of music so delicate, soft, and intense,
It was felt like an odour within the sense;

And the rose like a nymph to the bath addressed, 30
Which unveiled the depth of her glowing breast,
Till, fold after fold, to the fainting air
The soul of her beauty and love lay bare:

And the wand-like lily, which lifted up,
As a Maenad, its moonlight-coloured cup,
Till the fiery star, which is its eye, 35
Gazed through clear dew on the tender sky;

6 Like the Spirit of Love felt 1820; And the Spirit of Love felt 1839, 1st ed.; And the Spirit of Love felt 1839, 2nd ed.

And the jessamine faint, and the sweet tuberose,
 The sweetest flower for scent that blows;
 And all rare blossoms from every clime
 Grew in that garden in perfect prime.

40

And on the stream whose inconstant bosom
 Was pranked, under boughs of embowering blossom,
 With golden and green light, slanting through
 Their heaven of many a tangled hue,

Broad water-lilies lay tremulously,
 And starry river-buds glimmered by,
 And around them the soft stream did glide and dance
 With a motion of sweet sound and radiance.

45

And the sinuous paths of lawn and of moss,
 Which led through the garden along and across,
 Some open at once to the sun and the breeze,
 Some lost among bowers of blossoming trees,

50

Were all paved with daisies and delicate bells
 As fair as the fabulous asphodels,
 And flow'rets which, drooping as day drooped too,
 Fell into pavilions, white, purple, and blue,
 To roof the glow-worm from the evening dew.

55

And from this undefiled Paradise
 The flowers (as an infant's awakening eyes
 Smile on its mother, whose singing sweet
 Can first lull, and at last must awaken it),

60

When Heaven's blithe winds had unfolded them,
 As mine-lamps enkindle a hidden gem,
 Shone smiling to Heaven, and every one
 Shared joy in the light of the gentle sun;

65

For each one was interpenetrated
 With the light and the odour its neighbour shed,
 Like young lovers whom youth and love make dear
 Wrapped and filled by their mutual atmosphere.

But the Sensitive Plant which could give small fruit
 Of the love which it felt from the leaf to the root,
 Received more than all, it loved more than ever,
 Where none wanted but it, could belong to the giver,—

70

For the Sensitive Plant has no bright flower;
 Radiance and odour are not its dower;
 It loves, even like Love, its deep heart is full,
 It desires what it has not, the Beautiful!

75

The light winds which from unsustaining wings
 Shed the music of many murmurings;

49 and of moss] and moss *Harvard MS.*

The beams which dart from many a star
Of the flowers whose hues they bear afar; 80

The plumèd insects swift and free,
Like golden boats on a sunny sea,
Laden with light and odour, which pass
Over the gleam of the living grass; 85

The unseen clouds of the dew, which lie
Like fire in the flowers till the sun rides high,
Then wander like spirits among the spheres,
Each cloud faint with the fragrance it bears;

The quivering vapours of dim noontide,
Which like a sea o'er the warm earth glide,
In which every sound, and odour, and beam,
Move, as reeds in a single stream; 90

Each and all like ministering angels were
For the Sensitive Plant sweet joy to bear,
Whilst the lagging hours of the day went by
Like windless clouds o'er a tender sky. 95

And when evening descended from Heaven above,
And the Earth was all rest, and the air was all love,
And delight, though less bright, was far more deep,
And the day's veil fell from the world of sleep, 100

And the beasts, and the birds, and the insects were drowned
In an ocean of dreams without a sound;
Whose waves never mark, though they ever impress
The light sand which paves it, consciousness; 105

(Only overhead the sweet nightingale
Ever sang more sweet as the day might fail,
And snatches of its Elysian chant
Were mixed with the dreams of the Sensitive Plant);—

The Sensitive Plant was the earliest 110
Upgathered into the bosom of rest;
A sweet child weary of its delight,
The feeblest and yet the favourite,
Cradled within the embrace of Night.

PART SECOND

There was a Power in this sweet place,
An Eve in this Eden; a ruling Grace
Which to the flowers, did they waken or dream,
Was as God is to the starry scheme.

A Lady, the wonder of her kind, 5
Whose form was upborne by a lovely mind

Which, dilating, had moulded her mien and motion
Like a sea-flower unfolded beneath the ocean,

Tended the garden from morn to even :
And the meteors of that sublunar Heaven,
Like the lamps of the air when Night walks forth,
Laughed round her footsteps up from the Earth !

She had no companion of mortal race,
But her tremulous breath and her flushing face
Told, whilst the morn kissed the sleep from her eyes,
That her dreams were less slumber than Paradise :

As if some bright Spirit for her sweet sake
Had deserted Heaven while the stars were awake,
As if yet around her he lingering were,
Though the veil of daylight concealed him from her.

Her step seemed to pity the grass it pressed ;
You might hear by the heaving of her breast,
That the coming and going of the wind
Brought pleasure there and left passion behind.

And wherever her æry footstep trod,
Her trailing hair from the grassy sod
Erased its light vestige, with shadowy sweep,
Like a sunny storm o'er the dark green deep.

I doubt not the flowers of that garden sweet
Rejoiced in the sound of her gentle feet ;
I doubt not they felt the spirit that came
From her glowing fingers through all their frame.

She sprinkled bright water from the stream
On those that were faint with the sunny beam ;
And out of the cups of the heavy flowers
She emptied the rain of the thunder-showers.

She lifted their heads with her tender hands,
And sustained them with rods and osier-bands ;
If the flowers had been her own infants, she
Could never have nursed them more tenderly.

And all killing insects and gnawing worms,
And things of obscene and unlovely forms,
She bore, in a basket of Indian woof,
Into the rough woods far aloof,—

In a basket, of grasses and wild-flowers full,
The freshest her gentle hands could pull
For the poor banished insects, whose intent,
Although they did ill, was innocent.

15 morn *Harvard MS.*, 1839; moon 1820.
MS., 1839.

23 and going 1820; and the going *Harvard*

But the bee and the beamlike ephemeris
Whose path is the lightning's, and soft moths that kiss
The sweet lips of the flowers, and harm not, did she
Make her attendant angels be.

50

And many an antenatal tomb,
Where butterflies dream of the life to come,
She left clinging round the smooth and dark
Edge of the odorous cedar bark.

55

This fairest creature from earliest Spring
Thus moved through the garden ministering
All the sweet season of Summertime,
And ere the first leaf looked brown—she died!

60

PART THIRD

Three days the flowers of the garden fair,
Like stars when the moon is awakened, were,
Or the waves of Baiae, ere luminous
She floats up through the smoke of Vesuvius.

And on the fourth, the Sensitive Plant
Felt the sound of the funeral chant,
And the steps of the bearers, heavy and slow,
And the sobs of the mourners, deep and low;

5

The weary sound and the heavy breath,
And the silent motions of passing death,
And the smell, cold, oppressive, and dank,
Sent through the pores of the coffin-plank;

10

The dark grass, and the flowers among the grass,
Were bright with tears as the crowd did pass;
From their sighs the wind caught a mournful tone,
And sate in the pines, and gave groan for groan.

15

The garden, once fair, became cold and foul,
Like the corpse of her who had been its soul,
Which at first was lovely as if in sleep,
Then slowly changed, till it grew a heap
To make men tremble who never weep.

20

Swift Summer into the Autumn flowed,
And frost in the mist of the morning rode,
Though the noonday sun looked clear and bright,
Mocking the spoil of the secret night.

25

The rose-leaves, like flakes of crimson snow,
Paved the turf and the moss below.
The lilies were drooping, and white, and wan,
Like the head and the skin of a dying man.

59 All 1820, 1839; Through all *Harvard MS.*

19 lovely *Harvard MS.*, 1839; lively 1820.

23 of the morning 1820, 1839; of morning *Harvard MS.*

26 snow *Harvard MS.*, 1839;

now 1820.

28 And lilies were drooping, white and wan *Harvard MS.*

And Indian plants, of scent and hue
The sweetest that ever were fed on dew,
Leaf by leaf, day after day,
Were massed into the common clay. 30

And the leaves, brown, yellow, and gray, and red,
And white with the whiteness of what is dead,
Like troops of ghosts on the dry wind passed;
Their whistling noise made the birds aghast. 35

And the gusty winds waked the wingèd seeds,
Out of their birthplace of ugly weeds,
Till they clung round many a sweet flower's stem,
Which rotted into the earth with them. 40

The water-blooms under the rivulet
Fell from the stalks on which they were set;
And the eddies drove them here and there,
As the winds did those of the upper air. 45

Then the rain came down, and the broken stalks
Were bent and tangled across the walks;
And the leafless network of parasite bowers
Massed into ruin; and all sweet flowers.

Between the time of the wind and the snow
All loathliest weeds began to grow,
Whose coarse leaves were splashed with many a speck,
Like the water-snake's belly and the toad's back. 50

And thistles, and nettles, and darnels rank,
And the dock, and henbane, and hemlock dank,
Stretched out its long and hollow shank,
And stifled the air till the dead wind stank. 55

And plants, at whose names the verse feels loath,
Filled the place with a monstrous undergrowth,
Prickly, and pulpous, and blistering, and blue,
Livid, and starred with a lurid dew. 60

And agarics, and fungi, with mildew and mould
Started like mist from the wet ground cold;
Pale, fleshy, as if the decaying dead
With a spirit of growth had been animated! 65

Spawn, weeds, and filth, a leprous scum,
Made the running rivulet thick and dumb,
And at its outlet flags huge as stakes
Dammed it up with roots knotted like water-snakes.

And hour by hour, when the air was still,
The vapours arose which have strength to kill; 70

³² Leaf by leaf, day after day *Harvard MS.*; Leaf after leaf, day after day 1820; Leaf after leaf, day by day 1839. ⁶³ mist] mists *Harvard MS.*

At morn they were seen, at noon they were felt,
At night they were darkness no star could melt.

And unctuous meteors from spray to spray
Crept and flitted in broad noonday
Unseen; every branch on which they alit
By a venomous blight was burned and bit.

75

The Sensitive Plant, like one forbid,
Wept, and the tears within each lid
Of its folded leaves, which together grew,
Were changed to a blight of frozen glue.

80

For the leaves soon fell, and the branches soon
By the heavy axe of the blast were hewn;
The sap shrank to the root through every pore
As blood to a heart that will beat no more.

85

For Winter came: the wind was his whip:
One choppy finger was on his lip:
He had torn the cataracts from the hills
And they clanked at his girdle like manacles;

His breath was a chain which without a sound
The earth, and the air, and the water bound;
He came, fiercely driven, in his chariot-throne
By the tenfold blasts of the Arctic zone.

90

Then the weeds which were forms of living death
Fled from the frost to the earth beneath.
Their decay and sudden flight from frost
Was but like the vanishing of a ghost!

95

And under the roots of the Sensitive Plant
The moles and the dormice died for want:
The birds dropped stiff from the frozen air
And were caught in the branches naked and bare.

100

First there came down a thawing rain
And its dull drops froze on the boughs again;
Then there steamed up a freezing dew
Which to the drops of the thaw-rain grew;

105

And a northern whirlwind, wandering about
Like a wolf that had smelt a dead child out,
Shook the boughs thus laden, and heavy, and stiff,
And snapped them off with his rigid griff.

When Winter had gone and Spring came back
The Sensitive Plant was a leafless wreck;
But the mandrakes, and toadstools, and docks, and darnels,
Rose like the dead from their ruined charnels.

110

CONCLUSION

Whether the Sensitive Plant, or that
Which within its boughs like a Spirit sat, 115
Ere its outward form had known decay,
Now felt this change, I cannot say.

Whether that Lady's gentle mind,
No longer with the form combined
Which scattered love, as stars do light, 120
Found sadness, where it left delight,

I dare not guess; but in this life
Of error, ignorance, and strife,
Where nothing is, but all things seem,
And we the shadows of the dream, 125

It is a modest creed, and yet
Pleasant if one considers it,
To own that death itself must be,
Like all the rest, a mockery.

That garden sweet, that lady fair,
And all sweet shapes and odours there, 130
In truth have never passed away:
'Tis we, 'tis ours, are changed; not they.

For love, and beauty, and delight,
There is no death nor change: their might 135
Exceeds our organs, which endure
No light, being themselves obscure.

CANCELLED PASSAGE

[This stanza followed III. 62-65 in the *editio princeps*, 1820, but was omitted by Mrs. Shelley from all editions from 1839 onwards. It is cancelled in the Harvard MS.]

Their moss rotted off them, flake by flake,
Till the thick stalk stuck like a murderer's stake,
Where rags of loose flesh yet tremble on high,
Infecting the winds that wander by,

A VISION OF THE SEA

[Composed at Pisa early in 1820, and published with *Prometheus Unbound* in the same year. A transcript in Mrs. Shelley's handwriting is included in the Harvard MS. book, where it is dated 'April, 1820.']

'Tis the terror of tempest. The rags of the sail
Are flickering in ribbons within the fierce gale:
From the stark night of vapours the dim rain is driven,
And when lightning is loosed, like a deluge from Heaven,

114 Whether] And if *Harvard MS.*

118 Whether] Or if *Harvard MS.*

She sees the black trunks of the waterspouts spin 5
 And bend, as if Heaven was ruining in,
 Which they seemed to sustain with their terrible mass
 As if ocean had sunk from beneath them: they pass
 To their graves in the deep with an earthquake of sound,
 And the waves and the thunders, made silent around, 10
 Leave the wind to its echo. The vessel, now tossed
 Through the low-trailing rack of the tempest, is lost
 In the skirts of the thunder-cloud: now down the sweep
 Of the wind-cloven wave to the chasm of the deep
 It sinks, and the walls of the watery vale 15
 Whose depths of dread calm are unmoved by the gale,
 Dim mirrors of ruin, hang gleaming about;
 While the surf, like a chaos of stars, like a rout
 Of death-flames, like whirlpools of fire-flowing iron,
 With splendour and terror the black ship environ, 20
 Or like sulphur-flakes hurled from a mine of pale fire
 In fountains spout o'er it. In many a spire
 The pyramid-billows with white points of brine
 In the cope of the lightning inconstantly shine,
 As piercing the sky from the floor of the sea. 25
 The great ship seems splitting! it cracks as a tree,
 While an earthquake is splintering its root, ere the blast
 Of the whirlwind that stripped it of branches has passed.
 The intense thunder-balls which are raining from Heaven
 Have shattered its mast, and it stands black and riven. 30
 The chinks suck destruction. The heavy dead hulk
 On the living sea rolls an inanimate bulk,
 Like a corpse on the clay which is hungering to fold
 Its corruption around it. Meanwhile, from the hold,
 One deck is burst up by the waters below, 35
 And it splits like the ice when the thaw-breezes blow
 O'er the lakes of the desert! Who sit on the other?
 Is that all the crew that lie burying each other,
 Like the dead in a breach, round the foremast? Are those
 Twin tigers, who burst, when the waters arose, 40
 In the agony of terror, their chains in the hold;
 (What now makes them tame, is what then made them bold;)
 Who crouch, side by side, and have driven, like a crank,
 The deep grip of their claws through the vibrating plank:—
 Are these all? Nine weeks the tall vessel had lain 45
 On the windless expanse of the watery plain,
 Where the death-darting sun cast no shadow at noon,
 And there seemed to be fire in the beams of the moon,
 Till a lead-coloured fog gathered up from the deep,
 Whose breath was quick pestilence; then, the cold sleep 50
 Crept, like blight through the ears of a thick field of corn,
 O'er the populous vessel. And even and morn,

6 ruining *Harvard MS.*, 1839; raining 1820.
 35 by *Harvard MS.*; from 1820, 1839.

8 sunk *Harvard MS.*, 1839; sank 1820.

With their hammocks for coffins the seamen aghast
 Like dead men the dead limbs of their comrades cast
 Down the deep, which closed on them above and around, 55
 And the sharks and the dogfish their grave-clothes unbound,
 And were gluttoned like Jews with this manna rained down
 From God on their wilderness. One after one
 The mariners died; on the eve of this day,
 When the tempest was gathering in cloudy array, 60
 But seven remained. Six the thunder has smitten,
 And they lie black as mummies on which Time has written
 His scorn of the embalmer; the seventh, from the deck
 An oak-splinter pierced through his breast and his back.
 And hung out to the tempest, a wreck on the wreck. 65
 No more? At the helm sits a woman more fair
 Than Heaven, when, unbinding its star-braided hair,
 It sinks with the sun on the earth and the sea.
 She clasps a bright child on her upgathered knee;
 It laughs at the lightning, it mocks the mixed thunder 70
 Of the air and the sea, with desire and with wonder
 It is beckoning the tigers to rise and come near,
 It would play with those eyes where the radiance of fear
 Is outshining the meteors; its bosom beats high,
 The heart-fire of pleasure has kindled its eye, 75
 While its mother's is lustreless. 'Smile not, my child,
 But sleep deeply and sweetly, and so be beguiled
 Of the pang that awaits us, whatever that be,
 So dreadful since thou must divide it with me!
 Dream, sleep! This pale bosom, thy cradle and bed, 80
 Will it rock thee not, infant? 'Tis beating with dread!
 Alas! what is life, what is death, what are we,
 That when the ship sinks we no longer may be?
 What! to see thee no more, and to feel thee no more?
 To be after life what we have been before? 85
 Not to touch those sweet hands? Not to look on those eyes,
 Those lips, and that hair,—all the smiling disguise
 Thou yet wearest, sweet Spirit, which I, day by day,
 Have so long called my child, but which now fades away
 Like a rainbow, and I the fallen shower?'—Lo! the ship 90
 Is settling, it topples, the leeward ports dip;
 The tigers leap up when they feel the slow brine
 Crawling inch by inch on them; hair, ears, limbs, and eyne,
 Stand rigid with horror; a loud, long, hoarse cry
 Bursts at once from their vitals tremendously, 95
 And 'tis borne down the mountainous vale of the wave,
 Rebounding, like thunder, from crag to cave,
 Mixed with the clash of the lashing rain,
 Hurried on by the might of the hurricane:
 The hurricane came from the west, and passed on 100
 By the path of the gate of the eastern sun,

61 has 1820; had 1839.

87 all the *Harvard MS.*; all that 1820, 1839.

Transversely dividing the stream of the storm;
 As an arrowy serpent, pursuing the form
 Of an elephant, bursts through the brakes of the waste.
 Black as a cormorant the screaming blast, 105
 Between Ocean and Heaven, like an ocean, passed,
 Till it came to the clouds on the verge of the world
 Which, based on the sea and to Heaven upcurled,
 Like columns and walls did surround and sustain
 The dome of the tempest; it rent them in twain, 110
 As a flood rends its barriers of mountainous crag:
 And the dense clouds in many a ruin and rag,
 Like the stones of a temple ere earthquake has passed,
 Like the dust of its fall, on the whirlwind are cast;
 They are scattered like foam on the torrent; and where 115
 The wind has burst out through the chasm, from the air
 Of clear morning the beams of the sunrise flow in,
 Unimpeded, keen, golden, and crystalline,
 Banded armies of light and of air; at one gate
 They encounter, but interpenetrate. 120
 And that breach in the tempest is widening away,
 And the caverns of cloud are torn up by the day,
 And the fierce winds are sinking with weary wings,
 Lulled by the motion and murmurings
 And the long glassy heave of the rocking sea, 125
 And overhead glorious, but dreadful to see,
 The wrecks of the tempest, like vapours of gold,
 Are consuming in sunrise. The heaped waves behold
 The deep calm of blue Heaven dilating above,
 And, like passions made still by the presence of Love, 130
 Beneath the clear surface reflecting it slide
 Tremulous with soft influence; extending its tide
 From the Andes to Atlas, round mountain and isle,
 Round sea-birds and wrecks, paved with Heaven's azure smile,
 The wide world of waters is vibrating. Where 135
 Is the ship? On the verge of the wave where it lay
 One tiger is mingled in ghastly affray
 With a sea-snake. The foam and the smoke of the battle
 Stain the clear air with sunbows; the jar, and the rattle
 Of solid bones crushed by the infinite stress 140
 Of the snake's adamantine voluminousness;
 And the hum of the hot blood that spouts and rains
 Where the gripe of the tiger has wounded the veins
 Swollen with rage, strength, and effort; the whirl and the splash
 As of some hideous engine whose brazen teeth smash 145
 The thin winds and soft waves into thunder; the screams
 And hissings crawl fast o'er the smooth ocean-streams,
 Each sound like a centipede. Near this commotion,
 A blue shark is hanging within the blue ocean,
 The fin-winged tomb of the victor. The other 150

Is winning his way from the fate of his brother
 To his own with the speed of despair. Lo! a boat
 Advances; twelve rowers with the impulse of thought
 Urge on the keen keel,—the brine foams. At the stern
 Three marksmen stand levelling. Hot bullets burn 155
 In the breast of the tiger, which yet bears him on
 To his refuge and ruin. One fragment alone,—
 'Tis dwindling and sinking, 'tis now almost gone,—
 Of the wreck of the vessel peers out of the sea.
 With her left hand she grasps it impetuously, 160
 With her right she sustains her fair infant. Death, Fear,
 Love, Beauty, are mixed in the atmosphere,
 Which trembles and burns with the fervour of dread
 Around her wild eyes, her bright hand, and her head,
 Like a meteor of light o'er the waters! her child 165
 Is yet smiling, and playing, and murmuring; so smiled
 The false deep ere the storm. Like a sister and brother
 The child and the ocean still smile on each other,
 Whilst——

THE CLOUD

[Published with *Prometheus Unbound*, 1820.]

I BRING fresh showers for the thirsting flowers,
 From the seas and the streams;
 I bear light shade for the leaves when laid
 In their noonday dreams.
 From my wings are shaken the dews that waken 5
 The sweet buds every one,
 When rocked to rest on their mother's breast,
 As she dances about the sun.
 I wield the flail of the lashing hail,
 And whiten the green plains under, 10
 And then again I dissolve it in rain,
 And laugh as I pass in thunder.
 I sift the snow on the mountains below,
 And their great pines groan aghast;
 And all the night 'tis my pillow white,
 While I sleep in the arms of the blast. 15
 Sublime on the towers of my skiey bowers,
 Lightning my pilot sits;
 In a cavern under is fettered the thunder,
 It struggles and howls at fits; 20
 Over earth and ocean, with gentle motion,
 This pilot is guiding me,
 Lured by the love of the genii that move
 In the depths of the purple sea;
 Over the rills, and the crags, and the hills, 25

160 impetuously 1820, 1839; convulsively *Harvard MS.*
 6 buds 1839; birds 1820.

3 shade 1820; shades 1839.

Over the lakes and the plains,
 Wherever he dream, under mountain or stream,
 The Spirit he loves remains ;
 And I all the while bask in Heaven's blue smile,
 Whilst he is dissolving in rains. 30

The sanguine Sunrise, with his meteor eyes,
 And his burning plumes outspread,
 Leaps on the back of my sailing rack,
 When the morning star shines dead ;
 As on the jag of a mountain crag, 35
 Which an earthquake rocks and swings,
 An eagle alit one moment may sit
 In the light of its golden wings.
 And when Sunset may breathe, from the lit sea beneath,
 Its ardours of rest and of love, 40
 And the crimson pall of eve may fall
 From the depth of Heaven above,
 With wings folded I rest, on mine æry nest,
 As still as a brooding dove.

That orbèd maiden with white fire laden, 45
 Whom mortals call the Moon,
 Glides glimmering o'er my fleece-like floor,
 By the midnight breezes strewn ;
 And wherever the beat of her unseen feet,
 Which only the angels hear, 50
 May have broken the woof of my tent's thin roof,
 The stars peep behind her and peer ;
 And I laugh to see them whirl and flee,
 Like a swarm of golden bees,
 When I widen the rent in my wind-built tent, 55
 Till the calm rivers, lakes, and seas,
 Like strips of the sky fallen through me on high,
 Are each paved with the moon and these.

I bind the Sun's throne with a burning zone,
 And the Moon's with a girdle of pearl ; 60
 The volcanoes are dim, and the stars reel and swim,
 When the whirlwinds my banner unfurl.
 From cape to cape, with a bridge-like shape,
 Over a torrent sea,
 Sunbeam-proof, I hang like a roof,— 65
 The mountains its columns be.
 The triumphal arch through which I march
 With hurricane, fire, and snow,
 When the Powers of the air are chained to my chair,
 Is the million-coloured bow ; 70
 The sphere-fire above its soft colours wove,
 While the moist Earth was laughing below.

I am the daughter of Earth and Water,
 And the nursling of the Sky;
 I pass through the pores of the ocean and shores;
 I change, but I cannot die.
 For after the rain when with never a stain
 The pavilion of Heaven is bare,
 And the winds and sunbeams with their convex gleams
 Build up the blue dome of air,
 I silently laugh at my own cenotaph,
 And out of the caverns of rain,
 Like a child from the womb, like a ghost from the tomb,
 I arise and unbuild it again.

75

80

TO A SKYLARK

[Composed at Leghorn, 1820, and published with *Prometheus Unbound* in the same year. There is a transcript in the Harvard MS.]

HAIL to thee, blithe Spirit!
 Bird thou never wert,
 That from Heaven, or near it,
 Pourest thy full heart
 In profuse strains of unpremeditated
 art. 5

Higher still and higher
 From the earth thou springest
 Like a cloud of fire;
 The blue deep thou wingest,
 And singing still dost soar, and soaring
 ever singest. 10

In the golden lightning
 Of the sunken sun,
 O'er which clouds are bright'ning,
 Thou dost float and run;
 Like an unbodied joy whose race is
 just begun. 15

The pale purple even
 Melts around thy flight;
 Like a star of Heaven,
 In the broad daylight
 Thou art unseen, but yet I hear thy
 shrill delight, 20

Keen as are the arrows
 Of that silver sphere,
 Whose intense lamp narrows
 In the white dawn clear
 Until we hardly see—we feel that it is
 there. 25

All the earth and air
 With thy voice is loud,
 As, when night is bare,
 From one lonely cloud
 The moon rains out her beams, and
 Heaven is overflowed. 30

What thou art we know not;
 What is most like thee?
 From rainbow clouds there flow not
 Drops so bright to see
 As from thy presence showers a rain of
 melody. 35

Like a Poet hidden
 In the light of thought,
 Singing hymns unbidden,
 Till the world is wrought
 To sympathy with hopes and fears it
 heeded not: 40

Like a high-born maiden
 In a palace-tower,
 Soothing her love-laden
 Soul in secret hour
 With music sweet as love, which over-
 flows her bower: 45

Like a glow-worm golden
 In a dell of dew,
 Scattering unbeholden
 Its aëreal hue
 Among the flowers and grass, which
 screen it from the view! 50

Like a rose embowered
 In its own green leaves,
 By warm winds deflowered,
 Till the scent it gives
 Makes faint with too much sweet those
 heavy-winged thieves: 55
 Sound of vernal showers
 On the twinkling grass,
 Rain-awakened flowers,
 All that ever was
 Joyous, and clear, and fresh, thy music
 doth surpass: 60
 Teach us, Sprite or Bird,
 What sweet thoughts are thine:
 I have never heard
 Praise of love or wine
 That panted forth a flood of rapture so
 divine. 65
 Chorus Hymeneal,
 Or triumphal chant,
 Matched with thine would be all
 But an empty vaunt,
 A thing wherein we feel there is some
 hidden want. 70
 What objects are the fountains
 Of thy happy strain?
 What fields, or waves, or mountains?
 What shapes of sky or plain?
 What love of thine own kind? what
 ignorance of pain? 75
 With thy clear keen joyance
 Languor cannot be:
 Shadow of annoyance

Never came near thee:
 Thou lovest—but ne'er knew love's
 sad satiety. 80
 Waking or asleep,
 Thou of death must deem
 Things more true and deep
 Than we mortals dream,
 Or how could thy notes flow in such a
 crystal stream? 85
 We look before and after,
 And pine for what is not:
 Our sincerest laughter
 With some pain is fraught;
 Our sweetest songs are those that tell
 of saddest thought. 90
 Yet if we could scorn
 Hate, and pride, and fear;
 If we were things born
 Not to shed a tear,
 I know not how thy joy we ever should
 come near. 95
 Better than all measures
 Of delightful sound,
 Better than all treasures
 That in books are found,
 Thy skill to poet were, thou scorner of
 the ground! 100
 Teach me half the gladness
 That thy brain must know,
 Such harmonious madness
 From my lips would flow
 The world should listen then—as I am
 listening now. 105

ODE TO LIBERTY

[Composed early in 1820, and published, with *Prometheus Unbound*, in the same year. A transcript in Shelley's hand of lines 1-21 is included in the Harvard MS. book, and amongst the Boscombe MSS. there is a fragment of a rough draft (Garnett). For further particulars concerning the text see Editor's Notes.]

Yet, Freedom, yet, thy banner, torn but flying,
 Streams like a thunder-storm against the wind.—BYRON.

I

A GLORIOUS people vibrated again
 The lightning of the nations: Liberty
 From heart to heart, from tower to tower, o'er Spain,
 Scattering contagious fire into the sky,

55 those *Harvard MS.*; these 1820, 1839.

4 into] unto *Harvard MS.*

Gleamed. My soul spurned the chains of its dismay,
 And in the rapid plumes of song
 Clothed itself, sublime and strong,
 (As a young eagle soars the morning clouds among,)
 Hovering in verse o'er its accustomed prey;
 Till from its station in the Heaven of fame
 The Spirit's whirlwind rapped it, and the ray
 Of the remotest sphere of living flame
 Which paves the void was from behind it flung,
 As foam from a ship's swiftness, when there came
 A voice out of the deep: I will record the same.

II

The Sun and the serenest Moon sprang forth:
 The burning stars of the abyss were hurled
 Into the depths of Heaven. The daedal earth,
 That island in the ocean of the world,
 Hung in its cloud of all-sustaining air:
 But this divinest universe
 Was yet a chaos and a curse,
 For thou wert not: but, power from worst producing worse,
 The spirit of the beasts was kindled there,
 And of the birds, and of the watery forms,
 And there was war among them, and despair
 Within them, raging without truce or terms:
 The bosom of their violated nurse
 Groaned, for beasts warred on beasts, and worms on worms,
 And men on men; each heart was as a hell of storms.

III

Man, the imperial shape, then multiplied
 His generations under the pavilion
 Of the Sun's throne: palace and pyramid,
 Temple and prison, to many a swarming million
 Were, as to mountain-wolves their ragged caves.
 This human living multitude
 Was savage, cunning, blind, and rude,
 For thou wert not; but o'er the populous solitude,
 Like one fierce cloud over a waste of waves,
 Hung Tyranny; beneath, sate deified
 The sister-pest, congregator of slaves;
 Into the shadow of her pinions wide
 Anarchs and priests, who feed on gold and blood
 Till with the stain their inmost souls are dyed,
 Drove the astonished herds of men from every side.

IV

The nodding promontories, and blue isles,
 And cloud-like mountains, and dividuous waves
 Of Greece, basked glorious in the open smiles
 Of favouring Heaven: from their enchanted caves

Prophetic echoes flung dim melody.
 On the unapprehensive wild
 The vine, the corn, the olive mild,
 Grew savage yet, to human use unreconciled;
 And, like unfolded flowers beneath the sea,
 Like the man's thought dark in the infant's brain,
 Like aught that is which wraps what is to be,
 Art's deathless dreams lay veiled by many a vein
 Of Parian stone; and, yet a speechless child,
 Verse murmured, and Philosophy did strain
 Her lidless eyes for thee; when o'er the Aegean main

V

Athens arose: a city such as vision
 Builds from the purple crags and silver towers
 Of battlemented cloud, as in derision
 Of kingliest masonry: the ocean-floors
 Pave it; the evening sky pavilions it;
 Its portals are inhabited
 By thunder-zonèd winds, each head
 Within its cloudy wings with sun-fire garlanded,—
 A divine work! Athens, diviner yet,
 Gleamed with its crest of columns, on the will
 Of man, as on a mount of diamond, set;
 For thou wert, and thine all-creative skill
 Peopled, with forms that mock the eternal dead
 In marble immortality, that hill
 Which was thine earliest throne and latest oracle.

VI

Within the surface of Time's fleeting river
 Its wrinkled image lies, as then it lay
 Immovably unquiet, and for ever
 It trembles, but it cannot pass away!
 The voices of thy bards and sages thunder
 With an earth-awakening blast
 Through the caverns of the past:
 (Religion veils her eyes; Oppression shrinks aghast:)
 A wingèd sound of joy, and love, and wonder,
 Which soars where Expectation never flew,
 Rending the veil of space and time asunder!
 One ocean feeds the clouds, and streams, and dew;
 One Sun illumines Heaven; one Spirit vast
 With life and love makes chaos ever new,
 As Athens doth the world with thy delight renew.

VII

Then Rome was, and from thy deep bosom fairest,
 Like a wolf-cub from a Cadmaean Maenad¹,
 She drew the milk of greatness, though thy dearest
 From that Elysian food was yet unweanèd;

¹ See the *Bacchae* of Euripides.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

And many a deed of terrible uprightness
 By thy sweet love was sanctified;
 And in thy smile, and by thy side,
 Saintly Camillus lived, and firm Atilius died.
 But when tears stained thy robe of vestal whiteness,
 And gold profaned thy Capitolian throne,
 Thou didst desert, with spirit-wingèd lightness,
 The senate of the tyrants: they sunk prone
 Slaves of one tyrant: Palatinus sighed
 Faint echoes of Ionian song; that tone
 Thou didst delay to hear, lamenting to disown.

VIII

From what Hyrcanian glen or frozen hill,
 Or piny promontory of the Arctic main,
 Or utmost islet inaccessible,
 Didst thou lament the ruin of thy reign,
 Teaching the woods and waves, and desert rocks,
 And every Naiad's ice-cold urn,
 To talk in echoes sad and stern
 Of that sublimest lore which man had dared unlearn?
 For neither didst thou watch the wizard flocks
 Of the Scald's dreams, nor haunt the Druid's sleep.
 What if the tears rained through thy shattered locks
 Were quickly dried? for thou didst groan, not weep,
 When from its sea of death, to kill and burn,
 The Galilean serpent forth did creep,
 And made thy world an undistinguishable heap.

IX

A thousand years the Earth cried, 'Where art thou?'
 And then the shadow of thy coming fell
 On Saxon Alfred's olive-cinctured brow:
 And many a warrior-peopled citadel.
 Like rocks which fire lifts out of the flat deep,
 Arose in sacred Italy,
 Frowning o'er the tempestuous sea
 Of kings, and priests, and slaves, in tower-crowned majesty;
 That multitudinous anarchy did sweep
 And burst around their walls, like idle foam,
 Whilst from the human spirit's deepest deep
 Strange melody with love and awe struck dumb
 Dissonant arms; and Art, which cannot die,
 With divine wand traced on our earthly home
 Fit imagery to pave Heaven's everlasting dome.

X

Thou huntress swifter than the Moon! thou terror
 Of the world's wolves! thou bearer of the quiver,

113 lore 1839; love 1820.
 1820; want 1839.

116 shattered] scattered *cj. Rossetti.*

134 want

Whose sunlike shafts pierce tempest-wingèd Error,
 As light may pierce the clouds when they dis sever
 In the calm regions of the orient day! 140
 Luther caught thy wakening glance;
 Like lightning, from his leaden lance
 Reflected, it dissolved the visions of the trance
 In which, as in a tomb, the nations lay;
 And England's prophets hailed thee as their queen, 145
 In songs whose music cannot pass away,
 Though it must flow forever: not unseen
 Before the spirit-sighted countenance
 Of Milton didst thou pass, from the sad scene
 Beyond whose night he saw, with a dejected mien. 150

XI

The eager hours and unreluctant years
 As on a dawn-illuminèd mountain stood,
 Trampling to silence their loud hopes and fears,
 Darkening each other with their multitude,
 And cried aloud, 'Liberty!' Indignation 155
 Answered Pity from her cave;
 Death grew pale within the grave,
 And Desolation howled to the destroyer, Save!
 When like Heaven's Sun girt by the exhalation
 Of its own glorious light, thou didst arise, 160
 Chasing thy foes from nation unto nation
 Like shadows: as if day had cloven the skies
 At dreaming midnight o'er the western wave,
 Men started, staggering with a glad surprise,
 Under the lightnings of thine unfamiliar eyes. 165

XII

Thou Heaven of earth! what spells could pall thee then
 In ominous eclipse? a thousand years
 Bred from the slime of deep Oppression's den,
 Dyed all thy liquid light with blood and tears,
 Till thy sweet stars could weep the stain away; 170
 How like Bacchanals of blood
 Round France, the ghastly vintage, stood
 Destruction's sceptred slaves, and Folly's mitred brood!
 When one, like them, but mightier far than they,
 The Anarch of thine own bewildered powers, 175
 Rose: armies mingled in obscure array,
 Like clouds with clouds, darkening the sacred bowers
 Of serene Heaven. He, by the past pursued,
 Rests with those dead, but unforgotten hours,
 Whose ghosts scare victor kings in their ancestral towers. 180

XIII

England yet sleeps: was she not called of old?
 Spain calls her now, as with its thrilling thunder
 Vesuvius wakens Aetna, and the cold
 Snow-crag by its reply are cloven in sunder:
 O'er the lit waves every Aeolian isle 185
 From Pithecusa to Pelorus
 Howls, and leaps, and glares in chorus:
 They cry, 'Be dim; ye lamps of Heaven suspended o'er us!'
 Her chains are threads of gold, she need but smile
 And they dissolve; but Spain's were links of steel, 190
 Till bit to dust by virtue's keenest file.
 Twins of a single destiny! appeal
 To the eternal years enthroned before us
 In the dim West; impress us from a seal,
 All ye have thought and done! Time cannot dare conceal. 195

XIV

Tomb of Arminius! render up thy dead
 Till, like a standard from a watch-tower's staff,
 His soul may stream over the tyrant's head;
 Thy victory shall be his epitaph,
 Wild Bacchanal of truth's mysterious wine, 200
 King-deluded Germany,
 His dead spirit lives in thee.
 Why do we fear or hope? thou art already free!
 And thou, lost Paradise of this divine
 And glorious world! thou flowery wilderness! 205
 Thou island of eternity! thou shrine
 Where Desolation, clothed with loveliness,
 Worships the thing thou wert! O Italy,
 Gather thy blood into thy heart; repress
 The beasts who make their dens thy sacred palaces, 210

XV

Oh, that the free would stamp the impious name
 Of KING into the dust! or write it there,
 So that this blot upon the page of fame
 Were as a serpent's path, which the light air
 Erases, and the flat sands close behind! 215
 Ye the oracle have heard:
 Lift the victory-flashing sword,
 And cut the snaky knots of this foul gordian word,
 Which, weak itself as stubble, yet can bind
 Into a mass, irrefragably firm, 220
 The axes and the rods which awe mankind;
 The sound has poison in it, 'tis the sperm
 Of what makes life foul, cankerous, and abhorred;

Disdain not thou, at thine appointed term,
To set thine armed heel on this reluctant worm.

225

XVI

Oh, that the wise from their bright minds would kindle
Such lamps within the dome of this dim world,
That the pale name of PRIEST might shrink and dwindle
Into the hell from which it first was hurled,
A scoff of impious pride from fiends impure;
Till human thoughts might kneel alone,
Each before the judgement-throne

230

Of its own aweless soul, or of the Power unknown!
Oh, that the words which make the thoughts obscure
From which they spring, as clouds of glimmering dew
From a white lake blot Heaven's blue portraiture,
Were stripped of their thin masks and various hue
And frowns and smiles and splendours not their own,
Till in the nakedness of false and true
They stand before their Lord, each to receive its due!

235

240

XVII

He who taught man to vanquish whatsoever
Can be between the cradle and the grave
Crowned him the King of Life. Oh, vain endeavour!
If on his own high will, a willing slave,
He has enthroned the oppression and the oppressor.
What if earth can clothe and feed
Amplest millions at their need,

245

And power in thought be as the tree within the seed?

Or what if Art, an ardent intercessor,
Driving on fiery wings to Nature's throne,
Checks the great mother stooping to caress her,
And cries: 'Give me, thy child, dominion

250

Over all height and depth'? if Life can breed
New wants, and wealth from those who toil and groan,
Rend of thy gifts and hers a thousandfold for one!

255

XVIII

Come thou, but lead out of the inmost cave
Of man's deep spirit, as the morning-star
Beckons the Sun from the Eoan wave,

Wisdom. I hear the pennons of her car
Self-moving, like cloud charioted by flame;

260

Comes she not, and come ye not,
Rulers of eternal thought,

To judge, with solemn truth, life's ill-apportioned lot?
Blind Love, and equal Justice, and the Fame

Of what has been, the Hope of what will be?
 O Liberty! if such could be thy name
 Wert thou disjoined from these, or they from thee:
 If thine or theirs were treasures to be bought
 By blood or tears, have not the wise and free
 Wept tears, and blood like tears?—The solemn harmony

XIX

Paused, and the Spirit of that mighty singing
 To its abyss was suddenly withdrawn;
 Then, as a wild swan, when sublimely winging
 Its path athwart the thunder-smoke of dawn,
 Sinks headlong through the æreal golden light
 On the heavy-sounding plain,
 When the bolt has pierced its brain;
 As summer clouds dissolve, unburthened of their rain;
 As a far taper fades with fading night,
 As a brief insect dies with dying day,—
 My song, its pinions disarrayed of might,
 Drooped; o'er it closed the echoes far away
 Of the great voice which did its flight sustain,
 As waves which lately paved his watery way
 Hiss round a drowner's head in their tempestuous play.

CANCELLED PASSAGE OF THE ODE TO LIBERTY

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

WITHIN a cavern of man's trackless spirit
 Is throned an Image, so intensely fair
 That the adventurous thoughts that wander near it
 Worship, and as they kneel, tremble and wear
 The splendour of its presence, and the light
 Penetrates their dreamlike frame
 Till they become charged with the strength of flame.

TO ———

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

I FEAR thy kisses, gentle maiden,
 Thou needest not fear mine;
 My spirit is too deeply laden
 Ever to burthen thine.

II

I fear thy mien, thy tones, thy motion,
 Thou needest not fear mine;
 Innocent is the heart's devotion
 With which I worship thine.

ARETHUSA

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824, and dated by her 'Pisa, 1820.' There is a fair draft amongst the Shelley MSS. at the Bodleian Library. See Mr. C. D. Locock's *Examination*, &c., 1903, p. 24.]

<p>I</p> <p>ARETHUSA arose From her couch of snows In the Acroceraunian mountains,— From cloud and from crag, With many a jag, Shepherding her bright fountains. She leapt down the rocks, With her rainbow locks Streaming among the streams;— Her steps paved with green The downward ravine Which slopes to the western gleams; And gliding and springing She went, ever singing, In murmurs as soft as sleep; The Earth seemed to love her, And Heaven smiled above her, As she lingered towards the deep.</p>	<p>The loud Ocean heard, To its blue depth stirred, And divided at her prayer; And under the water The Earth's white daughter Fled like a sunny beam; Behind her descended Her billows, unblended With the brackish Dorian stream:— Like a gloomy stain On the emerald main Alpheus rushed behind,— As an eagle pursuing A dove to its ruin Down the streams of the cloudy wind.</p>	<p>40 45 50</p>
<p>II</p> <p>Then Alpheus bold, On his glacier cold, With his trident the mountains strook; And opened a chasm In the rocks—with the spasm All Erymanthus shook. And the black south wind It unsealed behind The urns of the silent snow, And earthquake and thunder Did rend in sunder The bars of the springs below. And the beard and the hair Of the River-god were Seen through the torrent's sweep, As he followed the light Of the fleet nymph's flight To the brink of the Dorian deep.</p>	<p>IV</p> <p>Under the bowers Where the Ocean Powers Sit on their pearlèd thrones; Through the coral woods Of the weltering floods, Over heaps of unvalued stones; Through the dim beams Which amid the streams Weave a network of coloured light; And under the caves, Where the shadowy waves Are as green as the forest's night:— Outspeeding the shark, And the sword-fish dark, Under the Ocean's foam, And up through the rifts Of the mountain cliffs They passed to their Dorian home.</p>	<p>55 60 65 70</p>
<p>III</p> <p>'Oh, save me! Oh, guide me! And bid the deep hide me, For he grasps me now by the hair!'</p>	<p>V</p> <p>And now from their fountains In Enna's mountains, Down one vale where the morning basks, Like friends once parted Grown single-hearted, They ply their watery tasks.</p>	<p>75</p>

26 unsealed B.; concealed 1824.

31 And the B.; The 1824.

69 Ocean's B.; ocean 1824.

At sunrise they leap
 From their cradles steep
 In the cave of the shelving hill;
 At noontide they flow
 Through the woods below
 And the meadows of asphodel;

80 And at night they sleep
 In the rocking deep
 Beneath the Ortygian shore;—
 Like spirits that lie
 In the azure sky
 When they love but live no more. 90

SONG OF PROSERPINE

WHILE GATHERING FLOWERS ON THE PLAIN OF ENNA

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed. There is a fair draft amongst the Shelley MSS. at the Bodleian Library. See Mr. C. D. Locock's *Examination*, &c., 1903, p. 24.]

I

SACRED Goddess, Mother Earth,
 Thou from whose immortal bosom
 Gods, and men, and beasts have birth,
 Leaf and blade, and bud and blossom,
 Breathe thine influence most divine
 On thine own child, Proserpine.

II

If with mists of evening dew
 Thou dost nourish these young flowers
 Till they grow, in scent and hue,
 Fairest children of the Hours,
 Breathe thine influence most divine
 On thine own child, Proserpine,

HYMN OF APOLLO

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. There is a fair draft amongst the Shelley MSS. at the Bodleian. See Mr. C. D. Locock's *Examination*, &c., 1903, p. 25.]

I

THE sleepless Hours who watch me as I lie,
 Curtained with star-inwoven tapestries
 From the broad moonlight of the sky,
 Fanning the busy dreams from my dim eyes,—
 Waken me when their Mother, the gray Dawn,
 Tells them that dreams and that the moon is gone.

II

Then I arise, and climbing Heaven's blue dome,
 I walk over the mountains and the waves,
 Leaving my robe upon the ocean foam;
 My footsteps pave the clouds with fire; the caves
 Are filled with my bright presence, and the air
 Leaves the green Earth to my embraces bare.

III

The sunbeams are my shafts, with which I kill
 Deceit, that loves the night and fears the day;
 All men who do or even imagine ill 15
 Fly me, and from the glory of my ray
 Good minds and open actions take new might,
 Until diminished by the reign of Night.

IV

I feed the clouds, the rainbows and the flowers
 With their aethereal colours; the moon's globe 20
 And the pure stars in their eternal bowers
 Are cinctured with my power as with a robe;
 Whatever lamps on Earth or Heaven may shine
 Are portions of one power, which is mine.

V

I stand at noon upon the peak of Heaven, 25
 Then with unwilling steps I wander down
 Into the clouds of the Atlantic even;
 For grief that I depart they weep and frown:
 What look is more delightful than the smile
 With which I soothe them from the western isle? 30

VI

I am the eye with which the Universe
 Beholds itself and knows itself divine;
 All harmony of instrument or verse,
 All prophecy, all medicine is mine,
 All light of art or nature;—to my song 35
 Victory and praise in its own right belong.

HYMN OF PAN

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. There is a fair draft amongst the Shelley MSS. at the Bodleian. See Mr. C. D. Locock's *Examination*, &c., 1903, p. 25.]

I

From the forests and highlands
 We come, we come;
 From the river-girt islands,
 Where loud waves are dumb
 Listening to my sweet pipings. 5
 The wind in the reeds and the rushes,
 The bees on the bells of thyme,
 The birds on the myrtle bushes,
 The cicale above in the lime,

And the lizards below in the grass, 10
 Were as silent as ever old Tmolus was,
 Listening to my sweet pipings.

II

Liquid Peneus was flowing,
 And all dark Tempe lay
 In Pelion's shadow, outgrowing 15
 The light of the dying day,
 Speeded by my sweet pipings.

32 itself divine] it is divine B. 34 is B.; are 1824. 36 its *cj. Rossetti*, 1870, B.; their
 1824. *Hymn of Pan*.—5, 12 Listening to] Listening B.

The Sileni, and Sylvans, and Fauns,
 And the Nymphs of the woods and
 the waves,
 To the edge of the moist river-lawns,
 And the brink of the dewy caves, ²¹
 And all that did then attend and
 follow,
 Were silent with love, as you now,
 Apollo,
 With envy of my sweet pipings.

III

I sang of the dancing stars, ²⁵
 I sang of the daedal Earth,
 And of Heaven—and the giant wars,

And Love, and Death, and Birth,—
 And then I changed my pipings,—
 Singing how down the vale of Maen-
 alus ³⁰
 I pursued a maiden and clasped a
 reed.
 Gods and men, we are all deluded
 thus!
 It breaks in our bosom and then we
 bleed:
 All wept, as I think both ye now
 would,
 If envy or age had not frozen your
 blood, ³⁵
 At the sorrow of my sweet pipings.

THE QUESTION

[Published by Leigh Hunt (with the signature Σ) in *The Literary Pocket-Book*, 1822. Reprinted by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. Copies exist in the Harvard MS. book, amongst the Boscombe MSS., and amongst the Ollier MSS.]

I

I DREAMED that, as I wandered by the way,
 Bare Winter suddenly was changed to Spring,
 And gentle odours led my steps astray,
 Mixed with a sound of waters murmuring
 Along a shelving bank of turf, which lay ⁵
 Under a copse, and hardly dared to fling
 Its green arms round the bosom of the stream,
 But kissed it and then fled, as thou mightest in dream.

II

There grew pied wind-flowers and violets,
 Daisies, those pearled Arcturi of the earth, ¹⁰
 The constellated flower that never sets;
 Faint oxslips; tender bluebells, at whose birth
 The sod scarce heaved; and that tall flower that wets—
 Like a child, half in tenderness and mirth—
 Its mother's face with Heaven's collected tears, ¹⁵
 When the low wind, its playmate's voice, it hears.

III

And in the warm hedge grew lush eglantine,
 Green cowbind and the moonlight-coloured may,
 And cherry-blossoms, and white cups, whose wine
 Was the bright dew, yet drained not by the day; ²⁰
 And wild roses, and ivy serpentine,
 With its dark buds and leaves, wandering astray;

The Question.—14 Like . . . mirth *Harvard MS.*, *Boscombe MS.*; wanting in *Ollier MS.*, 1822, 1824, 1839. 15 Heaven's collected *Harvard MS.*, *Ollier MS.*, 1822; Heaven-collected 1824, 1839.

And flowers azure, black, and streaked with gold,
Fairer than any wakened eyes behold.

IV

And nearer to the river's trembling edge 25
There grew broad flag-flowers, purple pranked with white,
And starry river buds among the sedge,
And floating water-lilies, broad and bright,
Which lit the oak that overhung the hedge
With moonlight beams of their own watery light; 30
And bulrushes, and reeds of such deep green
As soothed the dazzled eye with sober sheen.

V

Methought that of these visionary flowers
I made a nosegay, bound in such a way
That the same hues, which in their natural bowers 35
Were mingled or opposed, the like array
Kept these imprisoned children of the Hours
Within my hand,—and then, elate and gay,
I hastened to the spot whence I had come,
That I might there present it!—Oh! to whom? 40

THE TWO SPIRITS: AN ALLEGORY

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

First Spirit.

O THOU, who plumed with strong desire
Wouldst float above the earth, beware!
A Shadow tracks thy flight of fire—
Night is coming!
Bright are the regions of the air, 5
And among the winds and beams
It were delight to wander there—
Night is coming!

Second Spirit.

The deathless stars are bright above;
If I would cross the shade of night, 10
Within my heart is the lamp of love,
And that is day!
And the moon will smile with gentle light
On my golden plumes where'er they move;
The meteors will linger round my flight, 15
And make night day.

First Spirit.

But if the whirlwinds of darkness waken
Hail, and lightning, and stormy rain;

2 Wouldst 1839; Would 1824.

See, the bounds of the air are shaken—
 Night is coming!
 The red swift clouds of the hurricane
 Yon declining sun have overtaken,
 The clash of the hail sweeps over the plain—
 Night is coming!

Second Spirit.

I see the light, and I hear the sound;
 I'll sail on the flood of the tempest dark,
 With the calm within and the light around
 Which makes night day:
 And thou, when the gloom is deep and stark,
 Look from thy dull earth, slumber-bound,
 My moon-like flight thou then mayst mark
 On high, far away.

Some say there is a precipice
 Where one vast pine is frozen to ruin
 O'er piles of snow and chasms of ice
 Mid Alpine mountains;
 And that the languid storm pursuing
 That wingèd shape, for ever flies
 Round those hoar branches, aye renewing
 Its æry fountains.

Some say when nights are dry and clear,
 And the death-dews sleep on the morass,
 Sweet whispers are heard by the traveller,
 Which make night day:
 And a silver shape like his early love doth pass
 Upborne by her wild and glittering hair,
 And when he awakes on the fragrant grass,
 He finds night day.

ODE TO NAPLES¹

[Composed at San Julian di Pisa, August 17–25, 1820; published in *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. There is a copy, 'for the most part neat and legible,' amongst the Shelley MSS. at the Bodleian Library. See Mr. C. D. Locock's *Examination*, &c., 1903, pp. 14–18.]

EPODE I *a*

I STOOD within the City disinterred²;
 And heard the autumnal leaves like light footfalls
 Of spirits passing through the streets; and heard

³¹ moon-like 1824; moonlight 1839.

⁴⁴ make] makes 1824, 1839.

¹ The Author has connected many recollections of his visit to Pompeii and Baiae with the enthusiasm excited by the intelligence of the proclamation of a Constitutional Government at Naples. This has given a tinge of picturesque and descriptive imagery to the introductory Epodes which depict these scenes, and some of the majestic feelings permanently connected with the scene of this animating event.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

² Pompeii.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

The Mountain's slumberous voice at intervals
 Thrill through those roofless halls ; 5
 The oracular thunder penetrating shook
 The listening soul in my suspended blood ;
 I felt that Earth out of her deep heart spoke—
 I felt, but heard not :—through white columns glowed
 The isle-sustaining ocean-flood, 10
 A plane of light between two heavens of azure !
 Around me gleamed many a bright sepulchre
 Of whose pure beauty, Time, as if his pleasure
 Were to spare Death, had never made erasure ;
 But every living lineament was clear 15
 As in the sculptor's thought ; and there
 The wreaths of stony myrtle, ivy, and pine,
 Like winter leaves o'ergrown by moulded snow,
 Seemed only not to move and grow
 Because the crystal silence of the air 20
 Weighed on their life ; even as the Power divine
 Which then lulled all things, brooded upon mine.

EPODE II *α*

Then gentle winds arose
 With many a mingled close
 Of wild Aeolian sound, and mountain-odours keen ; 25
 And where the Baian ocean
 Welters with airlike motion,
 Within, above, around its bowers of starry green,
 Moving the sea-flowers in those purple caves,
 Even as the ever stormless atmosphere 30
 Floats o'er the Elysian realm,
 It bore me, like an Angel, o'er the waves
 Of sunlight, whose swift pinnacle of dewy air
 No storm can overwhelm.
 I sailed, where ever flows 35
 Under the calm Serene
 A spirit of deep emotion
 From the unknown graves
 Of the dead Kings of Melody¹.
 Shadowy Aornos darkened o'er the helm 40
 The horizontal aether ; Heaven stripped bare
 Its depth over Elysium, where the prow
 Made the invisible water white as snow ;
 From that Typhaean mount, Inarime,
 There streamed a sunbright vapour, like the standard 45
 Of some aethereal host ;
 Whilst from all the coast,
 Louder and louder, gathering round, there wandered
 Over the oracular woods and divine sea

25 odours *B.* ; odour 1824.42 depth *B.* ; depths 1824.45 sunbright *B.* ; sunlit 1824.¹ Homer and Virgil.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

Prophesyings which grew articulate—
They seize me—I must speak them!—be they fate!

50

STROPHE I

Naples! thou Heart of men which ever pantest
Naked, beneath the lidless eye of Heaven!
Elysian City, which to calm enchantest
The mutinous air and sea! they round thee, even
As sleep round Love, are driven!
Metropolis of a ruined Paradise
Long lost, late won, and yet but half regained!
Bright Altar of the bloodless sacrifice,
Which armed Victory offers up unstained
To Love, the flower-enchained!
Thou which wert once, and then didst cease to be,
Now art, and henceforth ever shalt be, free,
If Hope, and Truth, and Justice can avail,—
Hail, hail, all hail!

53

60

65

STROPHE II

Thou youngest giant birth
Which from the groaning earth
Leap'st, clothed in armour of impenetrable scale!
Last of the Intercessors!
Who 'gainst the Crowned Transgressors
Pleaded before God's love! Arrayed in Wisdom's mail,
Wave thy lightning lance in mirth
Nor let thy high heart fail,
Though from their hundred gates the leagued Oppressors
With hurried legions move!
Hail, hail, all hail!

70

75

ANTISTROPHE I α

What though Cimmerian Anarchs dare blaspheme
Freedom and thee? thy shield is as a mirror
To make their blind slaves see, and with fierce gleam
To turn his hungry sword upon the wearer;
A new Actæon's error
Shall theirs have been—devoured by their own hounds!
Be thou like the imperial Basilisk
Killing thy foe with unapparent wounds!
Gaze on Oppression, till at that dread risk
Aghast she pass from the Earth's disk:
Fear not, but gaze—for freemen mightier grow,
And slaves more feeble, gazing on their foe:—
If Hope, and Truth, and Justice may avail,
Thou shalt be great—All hail!

80

85

90

ANTISTROPHE II α

From Freedom's form divine,
From Nature's inmost shrine,

Strip every impious gawd, rend Error veil by veil;
 O'er Ruin desolate,
 O'er Falsehood's fallen state, 95
 Sit thou sublime, unawed; be the Destroyer pale!
 And equal laws be thine,
 And wingèd words let sail,
 Freightèd with truth even from the throne of God:
 That wealth, surviving fate, 100
 Be thine.—All hail!

ANTISTROPHE I β

Didst thou not start to hear Spain's thrilling paean
 From land to land re-echoed solemnly,
 Till silence became music? From the Aeæan¹
 To the cold Alps, eternal Italy 105
 Starts to hear thine! The Sea
 Which paves the desert streets of Venice laughs
 In light and music; widowed Genoa wan
 By moonlight spells ancestral epitaphs,
 Murmuring, 'Where is Doria?' fair Milan, 110
 Within whose veins long ran
 The viper's² palsyng venom, lifts her heel
 To bruise his head. The signal and the seal
 (If Hope and Truth and Justice can avail)
 Art thou of all these hopes.—O hail! 115

ANTISTROPHE II β

Florence! beneath the sun,
 Of cities fairest one,
 Blushes within her bower for Freedom's expectation:
 From eyes of quenchless hope
 Rome tears the priestly cope, 120
 As ruling once by power, so now by admiration,—
 An athlete stripped to run
 From a remoter station
 For the high prize lost on Philippi's shore:—
 As then Hope, Truth, and Justice did avail, 125
 So now may Fraud and Wrong! O hail!

EPODE I β

Hear ye the march as of the Earth-born Forms
 Arrayed against the ever-living Gods?
 The crash and darkness of a thousand storms
 Bursting their inaccessible abodes 130
 Of crags and thunder-clouds?
 See ye the banners blazoned to the day,
 Inwrought with emblems of barbaric pride?
 Dissonant threats kill Silence far away,
 The serene Heaven which wraps our Eden wide 135

¹ Aeæa, the island of Circe.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

² The viper was the armorial device of the Visconti, tyrants of Milan.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

With iron light is dyed ;
 The Anarchs of the North lead forth their legions
 Like Chaos o'er creation, uncreating ;
 An hundred tribes nourished on strange religions
 And lawless slaveries,—down the æreal regions 140
 Of the white Alps, desolating,
 Famished wolves that bide no waiting,
 Blotting the glowing footsteps of old glory,
 Trampling our columned cities into dust,
 Their dull and savage lust 145
 On Beauty's corse to sickness satiating—
 They come! The fields they tread look black and hoary
 With fire—from their red feet the streams run gory!

EPODE II β

Great Spirit, deepest Love!
 Which rulest and dost move 150
 All things which live and are, within the Italian shore;
 Who spreadest Heaven around it,
 Whose woods, rocks, waves, surround it;
 Who sittest in thy star, o'er Ocean's western floor;
 Spirit of beauty! at whose soft command 155
 The sunbeams and the showers distil their foison
 From the Earth's bosom chill;
 Oh, bid those beams be each a blinding brand
 Of lightning! bid those showers be dews of poison!
 Bid the Earth's plenty kill! 160
 Bid thy bright Heaven above,
 Whilst light and darkness bound it,
 Be their tomb who planned
 To make it ours and thine!
 Or, with thine harmonizing ardours fill 165
 And raise thy sons, as o'er the prone horizon
 Thy lamp feeds every twilight wave with fire—
 Be man's high hope and unextinct desire
 The instrument to work thy will divine!
 Then clouds from sunbeams, antelopes from leopards, 170
 And frowns and fears from thee,
 Would not more swiftly flee
 Than Celtic wolves from the Ausonian shepherds.—
 Whatever, Spirit, from thy starry shrine
 Thou yielddest or withholdest, oh, let be 175
 This city of thy worship ever free!

AUTUMN: A DIRGE

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

THE warm sun is failing, the bleak wind is wailing,
 The bare boughs are sighing, the pale flowers are dying,
 143 old 1824; lost B. 147 black 1824; blue B.

And the Year
 On the earth her death-bed, in a shroud of leaves dead,
 Is lying. 5
 Come, Months, come away,
 From November to May,
 In your saddest array;
 Follow the bier
 Of the dead cold Year, 10
 And like dim shadows watch by her sepulchre.

II

The chill rain is falling, the nipped worm is crawling,
 The rivers are swelling, the thunder is knelling
 For the Year;
 The blithe swallows are flown, and the lizards each gone 15
 To his dwelling;
 Come, Months, come away;
 Put on white, black, and gray;
 Let your light sisters play—
 Ye, follow the bier 20
 Of the dead cold Year,
 And make her grave green with tear on tear.

THE WANING MOON

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

AND like a dying lady, lean and pale,
 Who totters forth, wrapped in a gauzy veil,
 Out of her chamber, led by the insane
 And feeble wanderings of her fading brain,
 The moon arose up in the murky East, 5
 A white and shapeless mass—

TO THE MOON

[Published (I) by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824, (II) by W. M. Rossetti,
Complete P. W., 1870.]

I

ART thou pale for weariness
 Of climbing heaven and gazing on the earth,
 Wandering companionless
 Among the stars that have a different birth,—
 And ever changing, like a joyless eye 5
 That finds no object worth its constancy?

II

Thou chosen sister of the Spirit,
 That gazes on thee till in thee it pities . . .

DEATH

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

DEATH is here and death is there,
 Death is busy everywhere,
 All around, within, beneath,
 Above is death—and we are death.

II

Death has set his mark and seal 5
 On all we are and all we feel,
 On all we know and all we fear,

III

First our pleasures die—and then
 Our hopes, and then our fears—and
 when
 These are dead, the debt is due, 10
 Dust claims dust—and we die too.

IV

All things that we love and cherish,
 Like ourselves must fade and perish;
 Such is our rude mortal lot—
 Love itself would, did they not. 15

LIBERTY

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

THE fiery mountains answer each other;
 Their thunderings are echoed from zone to zone;
 The tempestuous oceans awake one another,
 And the ice-rocks are shaken round Winter's throne,
 When the clarion of the Typhoon is blown. 5

II

From a single cloud the lightening flashes,
 Whilst a thousand isles are illumined around,
 Earthquake is trampling one city to ashes,
 An hundred are shuddering and tottering; the sound
 Is bellowing underground. 10

III

But keener thy gaze than the lightening's glare,
 And swifter thy step than the earthquake's tramp;
 Thou deafenest the rage of the ocean; thy stare
 Makes blind the volcanoes; the sun's bright lamp
 To thine is a fen-fire damp. 15

IV

From billow and mountain and exhalation
 The sunlight is darted through vapour and blast;
 From spirit to spirit, from nation to nation,
 From city to hamlet thy dawning is cast,—
 And tyrants and slaves are like shadows of night
 In the van of the morning light. 20

Liberty.—4 zone *edd.* 1824, 1839; throne *later edd.*

SUMMER AND WINTER

[Published by Mrs. Shelley in *The Keepsake*, 1829. Mr. C. W. Frederickson of Brooklyn possesses a transcript in Mrs. Shelley's handwriting.]

It was a bright and cheerful afternoon,
Towards the end of the sunny month of June,
When the north wind congregates in crowds
The floating mountains of the silver clouds
From the horizon—and the stainless sky
Opens beyond them like eternity. 5

All things rejoiced beneath the sun; the weeds,
The river, and the corn-fields, and the reeds;
The willow leaves that glanced in the light breeze,
And the firm foliage of the larger trees. 10

It was a winter such as when birds die
In the deep forests; and the fishes lie
Stiffened in the translucent ice, which makes
Even the mud and slime of the warm lakes
A wrinkled clod as hard as brick; and when,
Among their children, comfortable men 15
Gather about great fires, and yet feel cold:
Alas, then, for the homeless beggar old!

THE TOWER OF FAMINE

[Published by Mrs. Shelley in *The Keepsake*, 1829. Mr. C. W. Frederickson of Brooklyn possesses a transcript in Mrs. Shelley's handwriting.]

AMID the desolation of a city,
Which was the cradle, and is now the grave
Of an extinguished people,—so that Pity
Weeps o'er the shipwrecks of Oblivion's wave,
There stands the Tower of Famine. It is built 5
Upon some prison-homes, whose dwellers rave

For bread, and gold, and blood: Pain, linked to Guilt,
Agitates the light flame of their hours,
Until its vital oil is spent or spilt.

There stands the pile, a tower amid the towers 10
And sacred domes; each marble-ribbed roof,
The brazen-gated temples, and the bowers

Of solitary wealth,—the tempest-proof
Pavilions of the dark Italian air,—
Are by its presence dimmed—they stand aloof, 15

And are withdrawn—so that the world is bare;
As if a spectre wrapped in shapeless terror
Amid a company of ladies fair

Summer and Winter.—11 birds die 1839; birds do die 1829. *The Tower of Famine.*—7 For]
With 1829.

Should glide and glow, till it became a mirror
Of all their beauty, and their hair and hue,
The life of their sweet eyes, with all its error,
Should be absorbed, till they to marble grew.

AN ALLEGORY

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

A PORTAL as of shadowy adamant
Stands yawning on the highway of the life
Which we all tread, a cavern huge and gaunt;
Around it rages an unceasing strife
Of shadows, like the restless clouds that haunt
The gap of some cleft mountain, lifted high
Into the whirlwinds of the upper sky.

II

And many pass it by with careless tread,
Not knowing that a shadowy . . .
Tracks every traveller even to where the dead
Wait peacefully for their companion new;
But others, by more curious humour led,
Pause to examine;—these are very few,
And they learn little there, except to know
That shadows follow them where'er they go.

THE WORLD'S WANDERERS

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

TELL me, thou Star, whose wings of light
Speed thee in thy fiery flight,
In what cavern of the night
Will thy pinions close now?

II

Tell me, Moon, thou pale and gray
Pilgrim of Heaven's homeless way,
In what depth of night or day
Seekest thou repose now?

III

Weary Wind, who wanderest
Like the world's rejected guest,
Hast thou still some secret nest
On the tree or billow?

An Allegory.—8 pass Rossetti; passed *edd.* 1824, 1839.

SONNET

[Published by Leigh Hunt, *The Literary Pocket-Book*, 1823. There is a transcript amongst the Ollier MSS., and another in the Harvard MS. book.]

YE hasten to the grave! What seek ye there,
 Ye restless thoughts and busy purposes
 Of the idle brain, which the world's livery wear?
 O thou quick heart, which pantest to possess
 All that pale Expectation feigneth fair! 5
 Thou vainly curious mind which wouldest guess
 Whence thou didst come, and whither thou must go,
 And all that never yet was known would know—
 Oh, whither hasten ye, that thus ye press,
 With such swift feet life's green and pleasant path, 10
 Seeking, alike from happiness and woe,
 A refuge in the cavern of gray death?
 O heart, and mind, and thoughts! what thing do you
 Hope to inherit in the grave below?

LINES TO A REVIEWER

[Published by Leigh Hunt, *The Literary Pocket-Book*, 1823. These lines, and the Sonnet immediately preceding, are signed Σ in the *Literary Pocket-Book*.]

ALAS, good friend, what profit can you see
 In hating such a hateless thing as me?
 There is no sport in hate where all the rage
 Is on one side: in vain would you assuage
 Your frowns upon an unresisting smile, 5
 In which not even contempt lurks to beguile
 Your heart, by some faint sympathy of hate.
 Oh, conquer what you cannot satiate!
 For to your passion I am far more coy
 Than ever yet was coldest maid or boy 10
 In winter noon. Of your antipathy
 If I am the Narcissus, you are free
 To pine into a sound with hating me.

FRAGMENT OF A SATIRE ON SATIRE

[Published by Edward Dowden, *Correspondence of Robert Southey and Caroline Bowles*, 1880.]

IF gibbets, axes, confiscations, chains,
 And racks of subtle torture, if the pains
 Of shame, of fiery Hell's tempestuous wave,
 Seen through the caverns of the shadowy grave,

Sonnet.—1 grave Ollier MS.; dead Harvard MS., 1823, edd. 1824, 1839. 5 pale Expectation Ollier MS.; anticipation Harvard MS., 1823, edd. 1824, 1839. 7 must Harvard MS., 1823; mayst 1824; mayest edd. 1839. 8 all that Harvard MS., 1823; that which edd. 1824, 1839. would Harvard MS., 1823; wouldst edd. 1839. *Lines to a Reviewer*.—3 where edd. 1824, 1839; when 1823.

Hurling the damned into the murky air
 While the meek blest sit smiling; if Despair
 And Hate, the rapid bloodhounds with which Terror
 Hunts through the world the homeless steps of Error,
 Are the true secrets of the commonweal
 To make men wise and just; . . .
 And not the sophisms of revenge and fear,
 Bloodier than is revenge . . .
 Then send the priests to every hearth and home
 To preach the burning wrath which is to come,
 In words like flakes of sulphur, such as thaw
 The frozen tears . . .
 If Satire's scourge could wake the slumbering hounds
 Of Conscience, or erase the deeper wounds,
 The leprous scars of callous Infamy;
 If it could make the present not to be,
 Or charm the dark past never to have been,
 Or turn regret to hope; who that has seen
 What Southey is and was, would not exclaim,
 'Lash on!' be the keen verse dipped in flame;
 Follow his flight with wingèd words, and urge
 The strokes of the inexorable scourge
 Until the heart be naked, till his soul
 See the contagion's spots foul;
 And from the mirror of Truth's sunlike shield,
 From which his Parthian arrow . . .
 Flash on his sight the spectres of the past,
 Until his mind's eye paint thereon—
 Let scorn like yawn below,
 And rain on him like flakes of fiery snow.
 This cannot be, it ought not, evil still—
 Suffering makes suffering, ill must follow ill.
 Rough words beget sad thoughts, and, beside,
 Men take a sullen and a stupid pride
 In being all they hate in others' shame,
 By a perverse antipathy of fame.
 'Tis not worth while to prove, as I could, how
 From the sweet fountains of our Nature flow
 These bitter waters; I will only say,
 If any friend would take Southey some day,
 And tell him, in a country walk alone,
 Softening harsh words with friendship's gentle tone,
 How incorrect his public conduct is,
 And what men think of it, 'twere not amiss.
 Far better than to make innocent ink—

GOOD-NIGHT

[Published by Leigh Hunt over the signature Σ, *The Literary Pocket-Book*, 1822. It is included in the Harvard MS. book, and there is a transcript by Shelley in a copy of *The Literary Pocket-Book*, 1819, presented by him to Miss Sophia Stacey, Dec. 29, 1820. (See *Love's Philosophy* and *Time Long Past*.) Our text is that of the *editio princeps*, 1822, with which the Harvard MS. and *P. P.*, 1824, agree. The variants of the Stacey MS., 1820, are given in the footnotes.]

I

GOOD-NIGHT? ah! no; the hour is ill
Which severs those it should unite;
Let us remain together still,
Then it will be *good* night.

II

How can I call the lone night good,
Though thy sweet wishes wing its flight? 5
Be it not said, thought, understood—
Then it will be—*good* night.

III

To hearts which near each other move
From evening close to morning light,
The night is good; because, my love,
They never *say* good-night. 10

BUONA NOTTE

[Published by Medwin, *The Angler in Wales, or Days and Nights of Sportsmen*, 1834. The text is revised by Rossetti from the Boscombe MS.]

I

'BUONA notte, buona notte!'—Come mai
La notte sarà buona senza te?
Non dirmi buona notte,—chè tu sai,
La notte sà star buona da per sè.

II

Solinga, scura, cupa, senza speme,
La notte quando Lilla m'abbandona; 5
Pei cuori chi si batton insieme
Ogni notte, senza dirla, sarà buona.

III

Come male buona notte si suona
Con sospiri e parole interrotte!—
Il modo di aver la notte buona
E mai non di dir la buona notte. 10

Good-night.—1 Good-night? no, love! the night is ill *Stacey MS.* 5 How were the night
without thee good *Stacey MS.* 9 The hearts that on each other beat *Stacey MS.* 11 Have
nights as good as they are sweet *Stacey MS.* 12 But never *say* good night *Stacey MS.*
Buona Notte.—2 sarà] sia 1834. 4 buona] bene 1834. 9 Come] Quanto 1834.

ORPHEUS

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862; revised and enlarged by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870.]

A. Not far from hence. From yonder pointed hill,
 Crowned with a ring of oaks, you may behold
 A dark and barren field, through which there flows,
 Sluggish and black, a deep but narrow stream,
 Which the wind ripples not, and the fair moon
 Gazes in vain, and finds no mirror there.
 Follow the herbless banks of that strange brook
 Until you pause beside a darksome pond,
 The fountain of this rivulet, whose gush
 Cannot be seen, hid by a rayless night
 That lives beneath the overhanging rock
 That shades the pool—an endless spring of gloom,
 Upon whose edge hovers the tender light,
 Trembling to mingle with its paramour,—
 But, as Syrinx fled Pan, so night flies day,
 Or, with most sullen and regardless hate,
 Refuses stern her heaven-born embrace.
 On one side of this jagged and shapeless hill
 There is a cave, from which there eddies up
 A pale mist, like æreal gossamer,
 Whose breath destroys all life—awhile it veils
 The rock—then, scattered by the wind, it flies
 Along the stream, or lingers on the clefts,
 Killing the sleepy worms, if aught bide there.
 Upon the beetling edge of that dark rock
 There stands a group of cypresses; not such
 As, with a graceful spire and stirring life,
 Pierce the pure heaven of your native vale,
 Whose branches the air plays among, but not
 Disturbs, fearing to spoil their solemn grace;
 But blasted and all wearily they stand,
 One to another clinging; their weak boughs
 Sigh as the wind buffets them, and they shake
 Beneath its blasts—a weatherbeaten crew!

Chorus. What wondrous sound is that, mournful and faint,
 But more melodious than the murmuring wind
 Which through the columns of a temple glides?

A. It is the wandering voice of Orpheus' lyre,
 Borne by the winds, who sigh that their rude king
 Hurries them fast from these air-feeding notes;
 But in their speed they bear along with them
 The waning sound, scattering it like dew
 Upon the startled sense.

Chorus. Does he still sing?
 Methought he rashly cast away his harp

When he had lost Eurydice.

A.	Ah, no!	45
Awhile he paused. As a poor hunted stag		
A moment shudders on the fearful brink		
Of a swift stream—the cruel hounds press on		
With deafening yell, the arrows glance and wound,—		
He plunges in: so Orpheus, seized and torn		50
By the sharp fangs of an insatiate grief,		
Maenad-like waved his lyre in the bright air,		
And wildly shrieked 'Where she is, it is dark!'		
And then he struck from forth the strings a sound		
Of deep and fearful melody. Alas!		55
In times long past, when fair Eurydice		
With her bright eyes sat listening by his side,		
He gently sang of high and heavenly themes.		
As in a brook, fretted with little waves		
By the light airs of spring—each riplet makes		60
A many-sided mirror for the sun,		
While it flows musically through green banks,		
Ceaseless and pauseless, ever clear and fresh,		
So flowed his song, reflecting the deep joy		
And tender love that fed those sweetest notes,		65
The heavenly offspring of ambrosial food.		
But that is past. Returning from drear Hell,		
He chose a lonely seat of unhewn stone,		
Blackened with lichens, on a herbless plain.		
Then from the deep and overflowing spring		70
Of his eternal ever-moving grief		
There rose to Heaven a sound of angry song.		
'Tis as a mighty cataract that parts		
Two sister rocks with waters swift and strong,		
And casts itself with horrid roar and din		75
Adown a steep; from a perennial source		
It ever flows and falls, and breaks the air		
With loud and fierce, but most harmonious roar,		
And as it falls casts up a vaporous spray		
Which the sun clothes in hues of Iris light.		80
Thus the tempestuous torrent of his grief		
Is clothed in sweetest sounds and varying words		
Of poesy. Unlike all human works,		
It never slackens, and through every change		
Wisdom and beauty and the power divine		85
Of mighty poesy together dwell,		
Mingling in sweet accord. As I have seen		
A fierce south blast tear through the darkened sky,		
Driving along a rack of winged clouds,		
Which may not pause, but ever hurry on,		90
As their wild shepherd wills them, while the stars,		
Twinkling and dim, peep from between the plumes.		

Anon the sky is cleared, and the high dome
 Of serene Heaven, starred with fiery flowers,
 Shuts in the shaken earth; or the still moon 95
 Swiftly, yet gracefully, begins her walk,
 Rising all bright behind the eastern hills.
 I talk of moon, and wind, and stars, and not
 Of song; but, would I echo his high song,
 Nature must lend me words ne'er used before, 100
 Or I must borrow from her perfect works,
 To picture forth his perfect attributes.
 He does no longer sit upon his throne
 Of rock upon a desert herbless plain,
 For the evergreen and knotted ilexes, 105
 And cypresses that seldom wave their boughs,
 And sea-green olives with their grateful fruit,
 And elms dragging along the twisted vines,
 Which drop their berries as they follow fast,
 And blackthorn bushes with their infant race 110
 Of blushing rose-blooms; beeches, to lovers dear,
 And weeping willow trees; all swift or slow,
 As their huge boughs or lighter dress permit,
 Have circled in his throne, and Earth herself
 Has sent from her maternal breast a growth 115
 Of starlike flowers and herbs of odour sweet,
 To pave the temple that his poesy
 Has framed, while near his feet grim lions couch,
 And kids, fearless from love, creep near his lair.
 Even the blind worms seem to feel the sound. 120
 The birds are silent, hanging down their heads,
 Perched on the lowest branches of the trees;
 Not even the nightingale intrudes a note
 In rivalry, but all entranced she listens,

FIORDISPINA

[Published in part (ll. 11-30) by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824; in full (from the Boscombe MS.) by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

THE season was the childhood of sweet June,
 Whose sunny hours from morning until noon
 Went creeping through the day with silent feet,
 Each with its load of pleasure; slow yet sweet;
 Like the long years of blest Eternity 5
 Never to be developed. Joy to thee,
 Fiordispina and thy Cosimo,
 For thou the wonders of the depth canst know
 Of this unfathomable flood of hours,
 Sparkling beneath the heaven which embowers— 10

112 trees 1870; too 1862.
1862. odour 1862; odours 1870.

113 huge 1870; long 1862.

116 starlike 1870; starry

They were two cousins, almost like to twins,
 Except that from the catalogue of sins
 Nature had rased their love—which could not be
 But by dissevering their nativity.
 And so they grew together like two flowers 15
 Upon one stem, which the same beams and showers
 Lull or awaken in their purple prime,
 Which the same hand will gather—the same clime
 Shake with decay. This fair day smiles to see
 All those who love—and who e'er loved like thee, 20
 Fiordispina? Scarcely Cosimo,
 Within whose bosom and whose brain now glow
 The ardours of a vision which obscure
 The very idol of its portraiture.
 He faints, dissolved into a sea of love; 25
 But thou art as a planet sphered above;
 But thou art Love itself—ruling the motion
 Of his subjected spirit: such emotion
 Must end in sin and sorrow, if sweet May
 Had not brought forth this morn—your wedding-day. 30

'Lie there; sleep awhile in your own dew,
 Ye faint-eyed children of the Hours,'
 Fiordispina said, and threw the flowers
 Which she had from the breathing—

A table near of polished porphyry. 35
 They seemed to wear a beauty from the eye
 That looked on them—a fragrance from the touch
 Whose warmth checked their life; a light such
 As sleepers wear, lulled by the voice they love,
 which did reprove 40
 The childish pity that she felt for them,
 And a remorse that from their stem
 She had divided such fair shapes made
 A feeling in the which was a shade
 Of gentle beauty on the flowers: there lay 45
 All gems that make the earth's dark bosom gay.
 rods of myrtle-buds and lemon-blooms,
 And that leaf tinted lightly which assumes
 The livery of unremembered snow—
 Violets whose eyes have drunk— 50

Fiordispina and her nurse are now
 Upon the steps of the high portico;
 Under the withered arm of Media
 She flings her glowing arm

step by step and stair by stair,
That withered woman, gray and white and brown—
More like a trunk by lichens overgrown
Than anything which once could have been human.
And ever as she goes the palsied woman

55

‘How slow and painfully you seem to walk,
Poor Media! you tire yourself with talk.’

60

‘And well it may,
Fiordispina, dearest—well-a-day!
You are hastening to a marriage-bed;
I to the grave!’—‘And if my love were dead,
Unless my heart deceives me, I would lie
Beside him in my shroud as willingly
As now in the gay night-dress Lilla wrought.’
‘Fie, child! Let that unseasonable thought
Not be remembered till it snows in June;
Such fancies are a music out of tune
With the sweet dance your heart must keep to-night.
What! would you take all beauty and delight
Back to the Paradise from which you sprung,
And leave to grosser mortals?—
And say, sweet lamb, would you not learn the sweet
And subtle mystery by which spirits meet?
Who knows whether the loving game is played,
When, once of mortal [vesture] disarrayed,
The naked soul goes wandering here and there
Through the wide deserts of Elysian air?
The violet dies not till it’—

65

70

75

80

TIME LONG PAST

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870. This is one of three poems (cf. *Love's Philosophy* and *Good-Night*) transcribed by Shelley in a copy of Leigh Hunt's *Literary Pocket-Book* for 1819 presented by him to Miss Sophia Stacey, December 29, 1820.]

I

LIKE the ghost of a dear friend dead
Is Time long past.
A tone which is now forever fled,
A hope which is now forever past,
A love so sweet it could not last,
Was Time long past.

5

II

There were sweet dreams in the night
Of Time long past:
And, was it sadness or delight,

Each day a shadow onward cast
Which made us wish it yet might
last—

10

That Time long past.

III

There is regret, almost remorse,
For Time long past.
'Tis like a child's beloved corse
A father watches, till at last
Beauty is like remembrance, cast
From Time long past,

15

FRAGMENT: THE DESERTS OF DIM SLEEP

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870.]

I WENT into the deserts of dim sleep—
 That world which, like an unknown wilderness,
 Bounds this with its recesses wide and deep—

FRAGMENT: 'THE VIEWLESS AND INVISIBLE
CONSEQUENCE'[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870.]

THE viewless and invisible Consequence
 Watches thy goings-out, and comings-in,
 And . . . hovers o'er thy guilty sleep,
 Unveiling every new-born deed, and thoughts
 More ghastly than those deeds—

5

FRAGMENT: A SERPENT-FACE

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870.]

HIS face was like a snake's—wrinkled and loose
 And withered—

FRAGMENT: DEATH IN LIFE

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

MY head is heavy, my limbs are weary,
 And it is not life that makes me move.

FRAGMENT: 'SUCH HOPE, AS IS THE SICK
DESPAIR OF GOOD'[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

SUCH hope, as is the sick despair of good,
 Such fear, as is the certainty of ill,
 Such doubt, as is pale Expectation's food
 Turned while she tastes to poison, when the will
 Is powerless, and the spirit . . .

5

FRAGMENT: 'ALAS! THIS IS NOT WHAT
I THOUGHT LIFE WAS'[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed. This fragment is joined by Forman with that immediately preceding.]

ALAS! this is not what I thought life was.
 I knew that there were crimes and evil men,
 Misery and hate; nor did I hope to pass
 Untouched by suffering, through the rugged glen.
 In mine own heart I saw as in a glass
 The hearts of others And when

I went among my kind, with triple brass
Of calm endurance my weak breast I armed,
To bear scorn, fear, and hate, a woful mass!

FRAGMENT: MILTON'S SPIRIT

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870.]

I DREAMED that Milton's spirit rose, and took
From life's green tree his Uranian lute;
And from his touch sweet thunder flowed, and shook
All human things built in contempt of man,—
And sanguine thrones and impious altars quaked,
Prisons and citadels. . .

FRAGMENT: 'UNRISEN SPLENDOUR OF THE BRIGHTEST SUN'

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

UNRISEN splendour of the brightest sun,
To rise upon our darkness, if the star
Now beckoning thee out of thy misty throne
Could thaw the clouds which wage an obscure war
With thy young brightness!

FRAGMENT: *PATER OMNIPOTENS*

[Edited from *MS. Shelley E 4* in the Bodleian Library, and published by Mr. C. D. Locock, *Examination, &c.*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1903. Here placed conjecturally amongst the compositions of 1820, but of uncertain date, and belonging possibly to 1819 or a still earlier year.]

SERENE in his unconquerable might
Endued[,] the Almighty King, his steadfast throne
Encompassed unapproachably with power
And darkness and deep solitude and awe
Stood like a black cloud on some aëry cliff
Embosoming its lightning—in his sight
Unnumbered glorious spirits trembling stood
Like slaves before their Lord—prostrate around
Heaven's multitudes hymned everlasting praise.

FRAGMENT: TO THE MIND OF MAN

[Edited, published and here placed as the preceding.]

THOU living light that in thy rainbow hues
Clothest this naked world; and over Sea
And Earth and air, and all the shapes that be
In peopled darkness of this wondrous world
The Spirit of thy glory dost diffuse
truth thou Vital Flame
Mysterious thought that in this mortal frame

Of things, with unextinguished lustre burnest
 Now pale and faint now high to Heaven upcurled
 That eer as thou dost languish still returnest 10
 And ever
 Before the before the Pyramids
 So soon as from the Earth formless and rude
 One living step had chased drear Solitude
 Thou wert, Thought; thy brightness charmed the lids 15
 Of the vast snake Eternity, who kept
 The tree of good and evil.—

NOTE ON POEMS OF 1820, BY MRS. SHELLEY

WE spent the latter part of the year 1819 in Florence, where Shelley passed several hours daily in the Gallery, and made various notes on its ancient works of art. His thoughts were a good deal taken up also by the project of a steam-boat, undertaken by a friend, an engineer, to ply between Leghorn and Marseilles, for which he supplied a sum of money. This was a sort of plan to delight Shelley, and he was greatly disappointed when it was thrown aside.

There was something in Florence that disagreed excessively with his health, and he suffered far more pain than usual; so much so that we left it sooner than we intended, and removed to Pisa, where we had some friends, and, above all, where we could consult the celebrated Vaccà as to the cause of Shelley's sufferings. He, like every other medical man, could only guess at that, and gave little hope of immediate relief; he enjoined him to abstain from all physicians and medicine, and to leave his complaint to Nature. As he had vainly consulted medical men of the highest repute in England, he was easily persuaded to adopt this advice. Pain and ill-health followed him to the end; but the residence at Pisa agreed with him better than any other, and there in consequence we remained.

In the Spring we spent a week or two near Leghorn, borrowing the house of some friends who were absent on a journey to England. It was on a beautiful summer evening, while wandering among the lanes whose myrtle-hedges were the bowers of the fire-flies, that we heard the carolling of the skylark which inspired one of the most beautiful of his poems. He addressed the letter to Mrs. Gisborne from this house, which was hers: he had made his study of the workshop of her son, who was an engineer. Mrs. Gisborne had been a friend of my father in her younger days. She was a lady of great accomplishments, and charming from her frank and affectionate nature. She had the most intense love of knowledge, a delicate and trembling sensibility, and preserved freshness of mind after a life of considerable adversity. As a favourite friend of my father, we had sought her with eagerness; and the most open and cordial friendship was established between us.

Our stay at the Baths of San Giuliano was shortened by an accident. At the foot of our garden ran the canal that communicated between the Serchio and the Arno. The Serchio overflowed its banks, and, breaking its bounds, this canal also overflowed; all this part of the country is below the level of its rivers, and the consequence was that it was speedily flooded. The rising waters filled the Square of the Baths, in the lower part of which our house was situated. The canal overflowed in the garden behind; the rising waters on either side at last burst open the doors, and, meeting in the house, rose to the height of six feet. It was a

picturesque sight at night to see the peasants driving the cattle from the plains below to the hills above the Baths. A fire was kept up to guide them across the ford; and the forms of the men and the animals showed in dark relief against the red glare of the flame, which was reflected again in the waters that filled the Square.

We then removed to Pisa, and took up our abode there for the winter. The extreme mildness of the climate suited Shelley, and his solitude was enlivened by an intercourse with several intimate friends. Chance cast us strangely enough on this quiet half-unpeopled town; but its very peace suited Shelley. Its river, the near mountains, and not distant sea, added to its attractions, and were the objects of many delightful excursions. We feared the south of Italy, and a hotter climate, on account of our child; our former bereavement inspiring us with terror. We seemed to take root here, and moved little afterwards; often, indeed, entertaining projects for visiting other parts of Italy, but still delaying. But for our fears on account of our child, I believe we should have wandered over the world, both being passionately fond of travelling. But human life, besides its great unalterable necessities, is ruled by a thousand lilliputian ties that shackle at the time, although it is difficult to account afterwards for their influence over our destiny.

POEMS WRITTEN IN 1821

DIRGE FOR THE YEAR

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824, and dated January 1, 1821.]

I

ORPHAN Hours, the Year is dead,
Come and sigh, come and weep!
Merry Hours, smile instead,
For the Year is but asleep.
See, it smiles as it is sleeping,
Mocking your untimely weeping.

II

As an earthquake rocks a corse
In its coffin in the clay,
So White Winter, that rough nurse,
Rocks the death-cold Year to-day; 10
Solemn Hours! wail aloud
For your mother in her shroud.

III

As the wild air stirs and sways
The tree-swung cradle of a child,
So the breath of these rude days 15
Rocks the Year:—be calm and mild,
Trembling Hours, she will arise
With new love within her eyes.

IV

January gray is here,
Like a sexton by her grave; 20
February bears the bier,
March with grief doth howl and rave,
And April weeps—but, O ye Hours!
Follow with May's fairest flowers.

TO NIGHT

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. There is a transcript in the Harvard MS. Book.]

I

<p>SWIFTLY walk o'er the western wave, Spirit of Night! Out of the misty eastern cave, Where, all the long and lone daylight,</p>	<p>Thou wovest dreams of joy and fear, Which make thee terrible and dear,— Swift be thy flight!</p>
---	---

To Night.—1 o'er *Harvard MS.*; over *edd.* 1824, 1839.

II

Wrap thy form in a mantle gray,
 Star-inwrought!
 Blind with thine hair the eyes of
 Day;
 Kiss her until she be wearied out,
 Then wander o'er city, and sea, and
 land,
 Touching all with thine opiate wand—
 Come, long-sought!

III

When I arose and saw the dawn, 15
 I sighed for thee;
 When light rode high, and the dew was
 gone,
 And noon lay heavy on flower and
 tree,
 And the weary Day turned to his rest,

Lingering like an unloved guest,
 I sighed for thee.

IV

Thy brother Death came, and cried,
 Wouldst thou me?
 Thy sweet child Sleep, the filmy-eyed,
 Murmured like a noontide bee, 25
 Shall I nestle near thy side?
 Wouldst thou me?—And I replied,
 No, not thee!

V

Death will come when thou art dead,
 Soon, too soon— 30
 Sleep will come when thou art fled;
 Of neither would I ask the boon
 I ask of thee, beloved Night—
 Swift be thine approaching flight,
 Come soon, soon! 35

TIME

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

UNFATHOMABLE Sea! whose waves are years,
 Ocean of Time, whose waters of deep woe
 Are brackish with the salt of human tears!
 Thou shoreless flood, which in thy ebb and flow
 Claspest the limits of mortality, 5
 And sick of prey, yet howling on for more,
 Vomitest thy wrecks on its inhospitable shore;
 Treacherous in calm, and terrible in storm,
 Who shall put forth on thee,
 Unfathomable Sea? 10

LINES

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

FAR, far away, O ye
 Halcyons of Memory,
 Seek some far calmer nest
 Than this abandoned breast!
 No news of your false spring 5
 To my heart's winter bring,
 Once having gone, in vain
 Ye come again,

II

Vultures, who build your bowers
 High in the Future's towers, 10
 Withered hopes on hopes are spread!
 Dying joys, choked by the dead,
 Will serve your beaks for prey
 Many a day,

FROM THE ARABIC: AN IMITATION

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. There is an intermediate draft amongst the Bodleian MSS. See Locock, *Examination*, &c., 1903, p. 13.]

I

My faint spirit was sitting in the light
 Of thy looks, my love;
 It panted for thee like the hind at noon
 For the brooks, my love.
 Thy barb whose hoofs outspeed the tempest's flight
 Bore thee far from me;
 My heart, for my weak feet were weary soon,
 Did companion thee.

5

II

Ah! fleeter far than fleetest storm or steed,
 Or the death they bear,
 The heart which tender thought clothes like a dove
 With the wings of care;
 In the battle, in the darkness, in the need,
 Shall mine cling to thee,
 Nor claim one smile for all the comfort, love,
 It may bring to thee.

10

15

TO EMILIA VIVIANI

[Published, i. by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824; ii. 1 by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862; ii. 2, 3 by H. Buxton Forman, *P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1876.]

I

MADONNA, wherefore hast thou sent to me
 Sweet-basil and mignonette?
 Embleming love and health, which never yet
 In the same wreath might be.
 Alas, and they are wet!
 Is it with thy kisses or thy tears?
 For never rain or dew
 Such fragrance drew
 From plant or flower—the very doubt endears
 My sadness ever new,
 The sighs I breathe, the tears I shed for thee.

5

10

II

Send the stars light, but send not love to me,
 In whom love ever made
 Health like a heap of embers soon to fade—

From the Arabic.—5 hoofs] feet B.

7 were] grew B.

9 Ah!] O B.

THE FUGITIVES

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

THE waters are flashing,
 The white hail is dashing,
 The lightnings are glancing,
 The hoar-spray is dancing—
 Away! 5
 The whirlwind is rolling,
 The thunder is tolling,
 The forest is swinging,
 The minster bells ringing—
 Come away! 10
 The Earth is like Ocean,
 Wreck-strewn and in motion:
 Bird, beast, man and worm
 Have crept out of the storm—
 Come away! 15

II

'Our boat has one sail,
 And the helmsman is pale;—
 A bold pilot I trow,
 Who should follow us now,'—
 Shouted he— 20
 And she cried: 'Ply the oar!
 Put off gaily from shore!'—
 As she spoke, bolts of death
 Mixed with hail, specked their path
 O'er the sea. 25
 And from isle, tower and rock,
 The blue beacon-cloud broke,
 And though dumb in the blast,
 The red cannon flashed fast
 From the lee, 30

III

And 'Fear'st thou?' and 'Fear'st
 thou?'
 And 'Seest thou?' and 'Hear'st thou?'
 And 'Drive we not free
 O'er the terrible sea,
 I and thou?' 35
 One boat-cloak did cover
 The loved and the lover—
 Their blood beats one measure,
 They murmur proud pleasure
 Soft and low;— 40
 While around the lashed Ocean,
 Like mountains in motion,
 Is withdrawn and uplifted,
 Sunk, shattered and shifted
 To and fro. 45

IV

In the court of the fortress
 Beside the pale portress,
 Like a bloodhound well beaten
 The bridegroom stands, eaten
 By shame; 50
 On the topmost watch-turret,
 As a death-boding spirit,
 Stands the gray tyrant father,
 To his voice the mad weather
 Seems tame; 55
 And with curses as wild
 As e'er clung to child,
 He devotes to the blast,
 The best, loveliest and last
 Of his name! 60

TO ———

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

MUSIC, when soft voices die,
 Vibrates in the memory—
 Odours, when sweet violets sicken,
 Live within the sense they quicken.
 Rose leaves, when the rose is dead, 5
 Are heaped for the belovèd's bed;
 And so thy thoughts, when thou art gone,
 Love itself shall slumber on.

SONG

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. There is a transcript in the Harvard MS. book.]

I

RARELY, rarely, comest thou,
Spirit of Delight!
Wherefore hast thou left me now
Many a day and night?
Many a weary night and day
'Tis since thou art fled away.

II

How shall ever one like me
Win thee back again?
With the joyous and the free
Thou wilt scoff at pain.
Spirit false! thou hast forgot
All but those who need thee not.

III

As a lizard with the shade
Of a trembling leaf,
Thou with sorrow art dismayed;
Even the sighs of grief
Reproach thee, that thou art not near,
And reproach thou wilt not hear.

IV

Let me set my mournful ditty
To a merry measure;
Thou wilt never come for pity,
Thou wilt come for pleasure;
Pity then will cut away
Those cruel wings, and thou wilt stay.

V

I love all that thou lovest,
Spirit of Delight!
The fresh Earth in new leaves dressed,
And the starry night;
Autumn evening, and the morn
When the golden mists are born.

VI

I love snow, and all the forms
Of the radiant frost;
I love waves, and winds, and storms,
Everything almost
Which is Nature's, and may be
Untainted by man's misery.

VII

I love tranquil solitude,
And such society
As is quiet, wise, and good;
Between thee and me
What difference? but thou dost
possess
The things I seek, not love them less.

VIII

I love Love—though he has wings,
And like light can flee,
But above all other things,
Spirit, I love thee—
Thou art love and life! Oh, come,
Make once more my heart thy home.

MUTABILITY

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. There is a fair draft amongst the Boscombe MSS.]

I

THE flower that smiles to-day
To-morrow dies;
All that we wish to stay
Tempts and then flies.
What is this world's delight?
Lightning that mocks the night,
Brief even as bright.

II

Virtue, how frail it is!
Friendship how rare!
Love, how it sells poor bliss
For proud despair!
But we, though soon they fall,
Survive their joy, and all
Which ours we call.

Mutability.—9 how Boscombe MS.; too *edd.* 1824, 1839.
though soon we or so soon they *cj.* Rossetti.

12 though soon they fall]

III

Whilst skies are blue and bright,	15	Make glad the day;	
Whilst flowers are gay,		Whilst yet the calm hours creep,	20
Whilst eyes that change ere night		Dream thou—and from thy sleep	
		Then wake to weep.	

LINES WRITTEN ON HEARING THE NEWS OF THE DEATH OF NAPOLEON

[Published with *Hellas*, 1821.]

WHAT! alive and so bold, O Earth?
 Art thou not overbold?
 What! leapest thou forth as of old
 In the light of thy morning mirth,
 The last of the flock of the starry fold?
 Ha! leapest thou forth as of old?
 Are not the limbs still when the ghost is fled,
 And canst thou move, Napoleon being dead?

5

How! is not thy quick heart cold?
 What spark is alive on thy hearth?
 How! is not *his* death-knell knolled?
 And livest *thou* still, Mother Earth?
 Thou wert warming thy fingers old
 O'er the embers covered and cold
 Of that most fiery spirit, when it fled—
 What, Mother, do you laugh now he is dead?

10

15

'Who has known me of old,' replied Earth,
 'Or who has my story told?
 It is thou who art overbold.'
 And the lightning of scorn laughed forth
 As she sung, 'To my bosom I fold
 All my sons when their knell is knolled,
 And so with living motion all are fed,
 And the quick spring like weeds out of the dead.

20

'Still alive and still bold,' shouted Earth,
 'I grow bolder and still more bold.
 The dead fill me ten thousandfold
 Fuller of speed, and splendour, and mirth.
 I was cloudy, and sullen, and cold,
 Like a frozen chaos uprolled,
 Till by the spirit of the mighty dead
 My heart grew warm. I feed on whom I fed.

25

30

'Ay, alive and still bold,' muttered Earth,
 'Napoleon's fierce spirit rolled,
 In terror and blood and gold,
 A torrent of ruin to death from his birth.

35

Leave the millions who follow to mould
 The metal before it be cold;
 And weave into his shame, which like the dead
 Shrouds me, the hopes that from his glory fled.'

40

SONNET: POLITICAL GREATNESS

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. There is a transcript, headed *Sonnet to the Republic of Benevento*, in the Harvard MS. book.]

NOR happiness, nor majesty, nor fame,
 Nor peace, nor strength, nor skill in arms or arts,
 Shepherd those herds whom tyranny makes tame;
 Verse echoes not one beating of their hearts,
 History is but the shadow of their shame,
 Art veils her glass, or from the pageant starts
 As to oblivion their blind millions fleet,
 Staining that Heaven with obscene imagery
 Of their own likeness. What are numbers knit
 By force or custom? Man who man would be,
 Must rule the empire of himself; in it
 Must be supreme, establishing his throne
 On vanquished will, quelling the anarchy
 Of hopes and fears, being himself alone.

5

10

THE AZIOLA

[Published by Mrs. Shelley in *The Keepsake*, 1829.]

I

'Do you not hear the Aziola cry?
 Methinks she must be nigh,'
 Said Mary, as we sate
 In dusk, ere stars were lit, or candles brought;
 And I, who thought
 This Aziola was some tedious woman,
 Asked, 'Who is Aziola?' How elate
 I felt to know that it was nothing human,
 No mockery of myself to fear or hate:
 And Mary saw my soul,
 And laughed, and said, 'Disquiet yourself not;
 'Tis nothing but a little downy owl.'

5

10

II

Sad Aziola! many an eventide
 Thy music I had heard
 By wood and stream, meadow and mountain-side,
 And fields and marshes wide,—
 Such as nor voice, nor lute, nor wind, nor bird,
 The soul ever stirred;

15

The Aziola.—4 ere stars] ere the stars *edd.* 1839.

9 or] and *edd.* 1839.

Unlike and far sweeter than them all.
 Sad Aziola! from that moment I
 Loved thee and thy sad cry.

20

A LAMENT

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

O WORLD! O life! O time!
 On whose last steps I climb,
 Trembling at that where I had stood before;
 When will return the glory of your prime?
 No more—Oh, never more!

5

II

Out of the day and night
 A joy has taken flight;
 Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar,
 Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight
 No more—Oh, never more!

10

REMEMBRANCE

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824, where it is entitled *A Lament*. Three MS. copies are extant: The Trelawny MS. (*Remembrance*), the Harvard MS. (*Song*) and the Houghton MS.—the last written by Shelley on a fly-leaf of a copy of *Adonais*.]

I

SWIFTER far than summer's flight—
 Swifter far than youth's delight—
 Swifter far than happy night,
 Art thou come and gone—
 As the earth when leaves are dead,
 As the night when sleep is sped,
 As the heart when joy is fled,
 I am left lone, alone.

II

The swallow summer comes again—
 The owlet night resumes her reign—
 But the wild-swan youth is fain

11

To fly with thee, false as thou.—
 My heart each day desires the morrow;
 Sleep itself is turned to sorrow;
 Vainly would my winter borrow
 Sunny leaves from any bough.

15

III

Lilies for a bridal bed—
 Roses for a matron's head—
 Violets for a maiden dead—
 Pansies let my flowers be:
 On the living grave I bear
 Scatter them without a tear—
 Let no friend, however dear,
 Waste one hope, one fear for me.

20

The Aziola.—19 them] they *edd.* 1839. *Remembrance*.—5-7 *So edd.* 1824, 1839, *Trelawny MS.*, *Harvard MS.*; As the wood when leaves are shed, As the night when sleep is fled, As the heart when joy is dead *Houghton MS.* 13 *So edd.* 1824, 1839, *Harvard MS.*, *Houghton MS.*; My heart to-day desires to-morrow *Trelawny MS.* 20 *So edd.* 1824, 1839, *Harvard MS.*, *Houghton MS.*; Sadder flowers find for me *Trelawny MS.* 24 one hope, one fear] a hope, a fear *Trelawny MS.*

TO EDWARD WILLIAMS

[Published in Ascham's edition of the *Poems*, 1834. There is a copy amongst the Trelawny MSS.]

I

THE serpent is shut out from Paradise.
 The wounded deer must seek the herb no more
 In which its heart-cure lies :
 The widowed dove must cease to haunt a bower
 Like that from which its mate with feigned sighs 5
 Fled in the April hour.
 I too must seldom seek again
 Near happy friends a mitigated pain.

II

Of hatred I am proud,—with scorn content ;
 Indifference, that once hurt me, now is grown 10
 Itself indifferent ;
 But, not to speak of love, pity alone
 Can break a spirit already more than bent.
 The miserable one
 Turns the mind's poison into food,— 15
 Its medicine is tears,—its evil good.

III

Therefore, if now I see you seldomer,
 Dear friends, dear *friend*! know that I only fly
 Your looks, because they stir
 Griefs that should sleep, and hopes that cannot die : 20
 The very comfort that they minister
 I scarce can bear, yet I,
 So deeply is the arrow gone,
 Should quickly perish if it were withdrawn.

IV

When I return to my cold home, you ask 25
 Why I am not as I have ever been.
 You spoil me for the task
 Of acting a forced part in life's dull scene,—
 Of wearing on my brow the idle mask
 Of author, great or mean, 30
 In the world's carnival. I sought
 Peace thus, and but in you I found it not.

V

Full half an hour, to-day, I tried my lot
 With various flowers, and every one still said,
 'She loves me—loves me not.' 35
 And if this meant a vision long since fled—

10 Indifference, which once hurt me, is now grown *Trelawny MS.*
friend Trelawny MS., 1839, 2nd ed. ; Dear gentle friend 1834, 1839, 1st ed.
Trelawny MS. 28 in *Trelawny MS.* ; on 1834, edd. 1839.

18 Dear friends, dear
 26 ever] lately

If it meant fortune, fame, or peace of thought—
 If it meant,—but I dread
 To speak what you may know too well:
 Still there was truth in the sad oracle.

40

VI

The crane o'er seas and forests seeks her home;
 No bird so wild but has its quiet nest,
 When it no more would roam;
 The sleepless billows on the ocean's breast
 Break like a bursting heart, and die in foam,
 And thus at length find rest:
 Doubtless there is a place of peace
 Where *my* weak heart and all its throbs will cease.

45

VII

I asked her, yesterday, if she believed
 That I had resolution. One who *had*
 Would ne'er have thus relieved
 His heart with words,—but what his judgement bade
 Would do, and leave the scorner unrelieved.
 These verses are too sad
 To send to you, but that I know,
 Happy yourself, you feel another's woe.

50

55

TO ———

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

II

ONE word is too often profaned
 For me to profane it,
 One feeling too falsely disdained
 For thee to disdain it;
 One hope is too like despair
 For prudence to smother,
 And pity from thee more dear
 Than that from another.

5

I can give not what men call love,
 But wilt thou accept not
 The worship the heart lifts above
 And the Heavens reject not,—
 The desire of the moth for the star,
 Of the night for the morrow,
 The devotion to something afar
 From the sphere of our sorrow?

10

15

TO ———

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. There is a Boscombe MS.]

I

WHEN passion's trance is overpast,
 If tenderness and truth could last,
 Or live, whilst all wild feelings keep

Some mortal slumber, dark and deep,
 I should not weep, I should not
 weep!

43 When 1839, 2nd ed.; Whence 1834, 1839, 1st ed.

48 will 1839, 2nd ed.; shall 1834,

1839, 1st ed.

53 unrelieved *Trelawny MS.*, 1839, 2nd ed.; unreprieved 1834, 1839, 1st ed.

54 are] were *Trelawny MS.*

II

It were enough to feel, to see,
Thy soft eyes gazing tenderly,
And dream the rest—and burn and be
The secret food of fires unseen,
Couldst thou but be as thou hast
been.

10

III

After the slumber of the year
The woodland violets reappear;
All things revive in field or grove,
And sky and sea, but two, which move
And form all others, life and love. 15

A BRIDAL SONG

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

THE golden gates of Sleep unbar
Where Strength and Beauty, meet
together,
Kindle their image like a star
In a sea of glassy weather!
Night, with all thy stars look
down,— 5
Darkness, weep thy holiest dew,—
Never smiled the inconstant moon
On a pair so true.

Let eyes not see their own delight;—
Haste, swift Hour, and thy flight 10
Oft renew.

II

Fairies, sprites, and angels, keep her!
Holy stars, permit no wrong!
And return to wake the sleeper,
Dawn,—ere it be long! 15
O joy! O fear! what will be done
In the absence of the sun!
Come along!

EPITHALAMIUM

ANOTHER VERSION OF THE PRECEDING

[Published by Medwin, *Life of Shelley*, 1847.]

NIGHT, with all thine eyes look down!
Darkness shed its holiest dew!
When ever smiled the inconstant moon
On a pair so true?
Hence, coy hour! and quench thy
light, 5
Lest eyes see their own delight!
Hence, swift hour! and thy loved
flight
Oft renew.

Boys.

O joy! O fear! what may be done
In the absence of the sun? 10
Come along!
The golden gates of sleep unbar!
When strength and beauty meet
together,
Kindles their image like a star

In a sea of glassy weather. 15
Hence, coy hour! and quench thy
light,
Lest eyes see their own delight!
Hence, swift hour! and thy loved
flight
Oft renew.

Girls.

O joy! O fear! what may be done 20
In the absence of the sun?
Come along!
Fairies! sprites! and angels, keep
her!
Holiest powers, permit no wrong!
And return, to wake the sleeper, 25
Dawn, ere it be long.
Hence, swift hour! and quench thy
light,

Lest eyes see their own delight!
Hence, coy hour! and thy loved
flight
Oft renew.

30

Boys and Girls.

O joy! O fear! what will be done
In the absence of the sun?

Come along!

ANOTHER VERSION OF THE SAME

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870, from the Trelawny MS.
of Edward Williams's play, *The Promise: or, A Year, a Month, and a Day.*]

Boys Sing.

NIGHT! with all thine eyes look down!
Darkness! weep thy holiest dew!
Never smiled the inconstant moon
On a pair so true.
Haste, coy hour! and quench all
light,
Lest eyes see their own delight!
Haste, swift hour! and thy loved flight
Oft renew!

5

Girls Sing.

Fairies, sprites, and angels, keep her!
Holy stars! permit no wrong!
And return, to wake the sleeper,
Dawn, ere it be long!
O joy! O fear! there is not one
Of us can guess what may be done
In the absence of the sun:—
Come along!

15

Boys.

Oh! linger long, thou envious eastern
lamp

In the damp
Caves of the deep!

Girls.

Nay, return, Vesper! urge thy lazy
car!
Swift unbar
The gates of Sleep!

20

Chorus.

The golden gate of Sleep unbar,
When Strength and Beauty, met
together,
Kindle their image, like a star
In a sea of glassy weather.
May the purple mist of love
Round them rise, and with them
move,
Nourishing each tender gem
Which, like flowers, will burst from
them.
As the fruit is to the tree
May their children ever be!

30

LOVE, HOPE, DESIRE, AND FEAR

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

AND many there were hurt by that
strong boy,
His name, they said, was Pleasure,
And near him stood, glorious beyond
measure,
Four Ladies who possess all empery
In earth and air and sea,
Nothing that lives from their award is
free.
Their names will I declare to thee,
Love, Hope, Desire, and Fear,

5

And they the regents are
Of the four elements that frame the
heart,
And each diversely exercised her art
By force or circumstance or sleight
To prove her dreadful might
Upon that poor domain.
Desire presented her [false] glass, and
then
The spirit dwelling there
Was spellbound to embrace what
seemed so fair

10

15

Within that magic mirror,
 And dazed by that bright error,
 It would have scorned the [shafts] of
 the avenger, 20
 And death, and penitence, and
 danger,
 Had not then silent Fear
 Touched with her palsying spear,
 So that as if a frozen torrent
 The blood was curdled in its cur-
 rent; 25
 It dared not speak, even in look or
 motion,
 But chained within itself its proud
 devotion.
 Between Desire and Fear thou wert
 A wretched thing, poor heart!
 Sad was his life who bore thee in his
 breast, 30
 Wild bird for that weak nest.
 Till Love even from fierce Desire it
 bought,
 And from the very wound of tender
 thought
 Drew solace, and the pity of sweet eyes

Gave strength to bear those gentle
 agonies, 35
 Surmount the loss, the terror, and the
 sorrow.
 Then Hope approached, she who can
 borrow
 For poor to-day, from rich to-
 morrow,
 And Fear withdrew, as night when
 day
 Descends upon the orient ray, 40
 And after long and vain endurance
 The poor heart woke to her assurance.
 —At one birth these four were born
 With the world's forgotten morn,
 And from Pleasure still they hold 45
 All it circles, as of old.
 When, as summer lures the swallow,
 Pleasure lures the heart to follow—
 O weak heart of little wit!
 The fair hand that wounded it, 50
 Seeking, like a panting hare,
 Refuge in the lynx's lair,
 Love, Desire, Hope, and Fear,
 Ever will be near.

FRAGMENTS WRITTEN FOR HELLAS

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

I

FAIREST of the Destinies,
 Disarray thy dazzling eyes:
 Keener far thy lightnings are
 Than the wingèd [bolts] thou
 bearest,
 And the smile thou wearest 5
 Wraps thee as a star
 Is wrapped in light.

II

Could Arethuse to her forsaken urn
 From Alpheus and the bitter Doris
 run,
 Or could the morning shafts of
 purest light 10
 Again into the quivers of the Sun
 Be gathered—could one thought from
 its wild flight
 Return into the temple of the brain

Without a change, without a stain,—
 Could aught that is, ever again 15
 Be what it once has ceased to be.
 Greece might again be free!

III

A star has fallen upon the earth
 Mid the benighted nations,
 A quenchless atom of immortal
 light, 20
 A living spark of Night,
 A cresset shaken from the constel-
 lations.
 Swifter than the thunder fell
 To the heart of Earth, the well
 Where its pulses flow and beat, 25
 And unextinct in that cold source
 Burns, and on course
 Guides the sphere which is its
 prison,

Like an angelic spirit pent
 In a form of mortal birth,
 Till, as a spirit half-arisen
 Shatters its charnel, it has rent,
 In the rapture of its mirth,

30 The thin and painted garment of the
 Earth,
 Ruining its chaos—a fierce breath 35
 Consuming all its forms of living
 death.

FRAGMENT: 'I WOULD NOT BE A KING'

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.]

I WOULD not be a king—enough
 Of woe it is to love;
 The path to power is steep and rough,
 And tempests reign above.
 I would not climb the imperial
 throne;

'Tis built on ice which fortune's sun
 Thaws in the height of noon.
 Then farewell, king, yet were I one,
 Care would not come so soon.
 Would he and I were far away 10
 Keeping flocks on Himalay!

GINEVRA

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824, and dated 'Pisa, 1821.']

WILD, pale, and wonder-stricken, even as one
 Who staggers forth into the air and sun
 From the dark chamber of a mortal fever,
 Bewildered, and incapable, and ever
 Fancying strange comments in her dizzy brain 5
 Of usual shapes, till the familiar train
 Of objects and of persons passed like things
 Strange as a dreamer's mad imaginings,
 Ginevra from the nuptial altar went;
 The vows to which her lips had sworn assent 10
 Rung in her brain still with a jarring din,
 Deafening the lost intelligence within.

And so she moved under the bridal veil,
 Which made the paleness of her cheek more pale,
 And deepened the faint crimson of her mouth, 15
 And darkened her dark locks, as moonlight doth,—
 And of the gold and jewels glittering there
 She scarce felt conscious,—but the weary glare
 Lay like a chaos of unwelcome light,
 Vexing the sense with gorgeous undelight, 20
 A moonbeam in the shadow of a cloud
 Was less heavenly fair—her face was bowed,
 And as she passed, the diamonds in her hair
 Were mirrored in the polished marble stair
 Which led from the cathedral to the street; 25
 And ever as she went her light fair feet
 Erased these images.

22 Was] Were *cf.* Rossetti.

26 ever 1824; even *edd.* 1839

The bride-maidens who round her thronging came,
 Some with a sense of self-rebuke and shame,
 Envyng the unenviable; and others
 Making the joy which should have been another's
 Their own by gentle sympathy; and some
 Sighing to think of an unhappy home:
 Some few admiring what can ever lure
 Maidens to leave the heaven serene and pure
 Of parents' smiles for life's great cheat; a thing
 Bitter to taste, sweet in imagining.

But they are all dispersed—and, lo! she stands
 Looking in idle grief on her white hands,
 Alone within the garden now her own;
 And through the sunny air, with jangling tone,
 The music of the merry marriage-bells,
 Killing the azure silence, sinks and swells;—
 Absorbed like one within a dream who dreams
 That he is dreaming, until slumber seems
 A mockery of itself—when suddenly
 Antonio stood before her, pale as she.
 With agony, with sorrow, and with pride,
 He lifted his wan eyes upon the bride,
 And said—'Is this thy faith?' and then as one
 Whose sleeping face is stricken by the sun
 With light like a harsh voice, which bids him rise
 And look upon his day of life with eyes
 Which weep in vain that they can dream no more,
 Ginevra saw her lover, and forbore
 To shriek or faint, and checked the stifling blood
 Rushing upon her heart, and unsubdued
 Said—'Friend, if earthly violence or ill,
 Suspicion, doubt, or the tyrannic will
 Of parents, chance or custom, time or change,
 Or circumstance, or terror, or revenge,
 Or wildered looks, or words, or evil speech,
 With all their stings and venom can impeach
 Our love,—we love not:—if the grave which hides
 The victim from the tyrant, and divides
 The cheek that whitens from the eyes that dart
 Imperious inquisition to the heart
 That is another's, could dissever ours,
 We love not.'—'What! do not the silent hours
 Beckon thee to Gherardi's bridal bed?
 Is not that ring'—a pledge, he would have said,
 Of broken vows, but she with patient look
 The golden circle from her finger took,
 And said—'Accept this token of my faith,
 The pledge of vows to be absolved by death;

And I am dead or shall be soon—my knell
 Will mix its music with that merry bell,
 Does it not sound as if they sweetly said
 "We toll a corpse out of the marriage-bed"?
 The flowers upon my bridal chamber strewn 80
 Will serve unfaded for my bier—so soon
 That even the dying violet will not die
 Before Ginevra.' The strong fantasy
 Had made her accents weaker and more weak,
 And quenched the crimson life upon her cheek, 85
 And glazed her eyes, and spread an atmosphere
 Round her, which chilled the burning noon with fear,
 Making her but an image of the thought
 Which, like a prophet or a shadow, brought
 News of the terrors of the coming time. 90
 Like an accuser branded with the crime
 He would have cast on a beloved friend,
 Whose dying eyes reproach not to the end
 The pale betrayer—he then with vain repentance
 Would share, he cannot now avert, the sentence— 95
 Antonio stood and would have spoken, when
 The compound voice of women and of men
 Was heard approaching; he retired, while she
 Was led amid the admiring company
 Back to the palace,—and her maidens soon 100
 Changed her attire for the afternoon,
 And left her at her own request to keep
 An hour of quiet and rest:—like one asleep
 With open eyes and folded hands she lay,
 Pale in the light of the declining day. 105

Meanwhile the day sinks fast, the sun is set,
 And in the lighted hall the guests are met;
 The beautiful looked lovelier in the light
 Of love, and admiration, and delight
 Reflected from a thousand hearts and eyes, 110
 Kindling a momentary Paradise.
 This crowd is safer than the silent wood,
 Where love's own doubts disturb the solitude;
 On frozen hearts the fiery rain of wine
 Falls, and the dew of music more divine 115
 Tempers the deep emotions of the time
 To spirits cradled in a sunny clime:—
 How many meet, who never yet have met,
 To part too soon, but never to forget.
 How many saw the beauty, power and wit 120
 Of looks and words which ne'er enchanted yet;
 But life's familiar veil was now withdrawn,
 As the world leaps before an earthquake's dawn,
 And unprophetic of the coming hours,

The matin winds from the expanded flowers 125
 Scatter their hoarded incense, and awaken
 The earth, until the dewy sleep is shaken
 From every living heart which it possesses,
 Through seas and winds, cities and wildernesses,
 As if the future and the past were all 130
 Treasured i' the instant;—so Gherardi's hall
 Laughed in the mirth of its lord's festival,
 Till some one asked—'Where is the Bride?' And then
 A bridesmaid went,—and ere she came again
 A silence fell upon the guests—a pause 135
 Of expectation, as when beauty awes
 All hearts with its approach, though unbeheld,
 Then wonder, and then fear that wonder quelled;—
 For whispers passed from mouth to ear which drew
 The colour from the hearer's cheeks, and flew 140
 Louder and swifter round the company;
 And then Gherardi entered with an eye
 Of ostentatious trouble, and a crowd
 Surrounded him, and some were weeping loud.

They found Ginevra dead! if it be death 145
 To lie without motion, or pulse, or breath,
 With waxen cheeks, and limbs cold, stiff, and white,
 And open eyes, whose fixed and glassy light
 Mocked at the speculation they had owned.
 If it be death, when there is felt around 150
 A smell of clay, a pale and icy glare,
 And silence, and a sense that lifts the hair
 From the scalp to the ankles, as it were
 Corruption from the spirit passing forth,
 And giving all it shrouded to the earth, 155
 And leaving as swift lightning in its flight
 Ashes, and smoke, and darkness: in our night
 Of thought we know thus much of death,—no more
 Than the unborn dream of our life before
 Their barks are wrecked on its inhospitable shore. 160
 The marriage feast and its solemnity
 Was turned to funeral pomp—the company,
 With heavy hearts and looks, broke up; nor they
 Who loved the dead went weeping on their way
 Alone, but sorrow mixed with sad surprise 165
 Loosened the springs of pity in all eyes,
 On which that form, whose fate they weep in vain,
 Will never, thought they, kindle smiles again.
 The lamps which, half extinguished in their haste,
 Gleamed few and faint o'er the abandoned feast, 170
 Showed as it were within the vaulted room
 A cloud of sorrow hanging, as if gloom

Had passed out of men's minds into the air.
 Some few yet stood around Gherardi there,
 Friends and relations of the dead,—and he, 175
 A loveless man, accepted torpidly
 The consolation that he wanted not ;
 Awe in the place of grief within him wrought.
 Their whispers made the solemn silence seem
 More still—some wept, . . . 180
 Some melted into tears without a sob,
 And some with hearts that might be heard to throb
 Leaned on the table, and at intervals
 Shuddered to hear through the deserted halls
 And corridors the thrilling shrieks which came 185
 Upon the breeze of night, that shook the flame
 Of every torch and taper as it swept
 From out the chamber where the women kept ;—
 Their tears fell on the dear companion cold
 Of pleasures now departed ; then was knolled 190
 The bell of death, and soon the priests arrived,
 And finding Death their penitent had shrived,
 Returned like ravens from a corpse whereon
 A vulture has just feasted to the bone.
 And then the mourning women came.— 195

THE DIRGE.

Old winter was gone
 In his weakness back to the mountains hoar,
 And the spring came down
 From the planet that hovers upon the shore
 Where the sea of sunlight encroaches 200
 On the limits of wintry night ;—
 If the land, and the air, and the sea,
 Rejoice not when spring approaches,
 We did not rejoice in thee,
 Ginevra ! 205
 She is still, she is cold
 On the bridal couch,
 One step to the white deathbed,
 And one to the bier,
 And one to the charnel—and one, oh where ? 210
 The dark arrow fled
 In the noon.
 Ere the sun through heaven once more has rolled,
 The rats in her heart
 Will have made their nest, 215
 And the worms be alive in her golden hair,
 While the Spirit that guides the sun,
 Sits throned in his flaming chair,
 She shall sleep.

EVENING: PONTE AL MARE, PISA

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. There is a draft amongst the Boscombe MSS.]

I

THE sun is set; the swallows are asleep;
 The bats are flitting fast in the gray air;
 The slow soft toads out of damp corners creep,
 And evening's breath, wandering here and there
 Over the quivering surface of the stream,
 Wakes not one ripple from its summer dream.

5

II

There is no dew on the dry grass to-night,
 Nor damp within the shadow of the trees;
 The wind is intermitting, dry, and light;
 And in the inconstant motion of the breeze
 The dust and straws are driven up and down,
 And whirled about the pavement of the town.

10

III

Within the surface of the fleeting river
 The wrinkled image of the city lay,
 Immovably unquiet, and forever
 It trembles, but it never fades away;
 Go to the . . .
 You, being changed, will find it then as now.

15

IV

The chasm in which the sun has sunk is shut
 By darkest barriers of cinereous cloud,
 Like mountain over mountain huddled—but
 Growing and moving upwards in a crowd,
 And over it a space of watery blue,
 Which the keen evening star is shining through.

20

THE BOAT ON THE SERCHIO

[Published in part (ll. 1-61, 88-118) by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824;
 revised and enlarged by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870.]

OUR boat is asleep on Serchio's stream,
 Its sails are folded like thoughts in a dream,
 The helm sways idly, hither and thither;
 Dominic, the boatman, has brought the mast,
 And the oars, and the sails; but 'tis sleeping fast,
 Like a beast, unconscious of its tether.

5

The stars burnt out in the pale blue air,
 And the thin white moon lay withering there;

To tower, and cavern, and rift, and tree,
 The owl and the bat fled drowsily. 10
 Day had kindled the dewy woods,
 And the rocks above and the stream below,
 And the vapours in their multitudes,
 And the Apennine's shroud of summer snow,
 And clothed with light of æry gold 15
 The mists in their eastern caves uprolled.

Day had awakened all things that be,
 The lark and the thrush and the swallow free,
 And the milkmaid's song and the mower's scythe,
 And the matin-bell and the mountain bee: 20
 Fireflies were quenched on the dewy corn,
 Glow-worms went out on the river's brim,
 Like lamps which a student forgets to trim:
 The beetle forgot to wind his horn,
 The crickets were still in the meadow and hill: 25
 Like a flock of rooks at a farmer's gun
 Night's dreams and terrors, every one,
 Fled from the brains which are their prey
 From the lamp's death to the morning ray.

All rose to do the task He set to each, 30
 Who shaped us to His ends and not our own;
 The million rose to learn, and one to teach
 What none yet ever knew or can be known.
 And many rose
 Whose woe was such that fear became desire;— 35
 Melchior and Lionel were not among those;
 They from the throng of men had stepped aside,
 And made their home under the green hill-side.
 It was that hill, whose intervening brow
 Screens Lucca from the Pisan's envious eye, 40
 Which the circumfluous plain waving below,
 Like a wide lake of green fertility,
 With streams and fields and marshes bare,
 Divides from the far Apennines—which lie
 Islanded in the immeasurable air. 45

'What think you, as she lies in her green cove,
 Our little sleeping boat is dreaming of?'
 'If morning dreams are true, why I should guess
 That she was dreaming of our idleness,
 And of the miles of watery way 50
 We should have led her by this time of day.'—

'Never mind,' said Lionel,
 'Give care to the winds, they can bear it well
 About yon poplar-tops; and see
 The white clouds are driving merrily, 55

And the stars we miss this morn will light
 More willingly our return to-night.—
 How it whistles, Dominic's long black hair!
 List, my dear fellow; the breeze blows fair:
 Hear how it sings into the air—'

60

—'Of us and of our lazy motions,'
 Impatiently said Melchior,
 'If I can guess a boat's emotions;
 And how we ought, two hours before,
 To have been the devil knows where.'
 And then, in such transalpine Tuscan
 As would have killed a Della-Cruscan,

65

So, Lionel according to his art
 Weaving his idle words, Melchior said:
 'She dreams that we are not yet out of bed;
 We'll put a soul into her, and a heart
 Which like a dove chased by a dove shall beat.'

70

'Ay, heave the ballast overboard,
 And stow the eatables in the aft locker.'
 'Would not this keg be best a little lowered?'
 'No, now all's right.' 'Those bottles of warm tea—
 (Give me some straw)—must be stowed tenderly;
 Such as we used, in summer after six,
 To cram in greatcoat pockets, and to mix
 Hard eggs and radishes and rolls at Eton,
 And, couched on stolen hay in those green harbours
 Farmers called gaps, and we schoolboys called arbours,
 Would feast till eight.'

75

80

With a bottle in one hand,
 As if his very soul were at a stand,
 Lionel stood—when Melchior brought him steady:—
 'Sit at the helm—fasten this sheet—all ready!'

85

The chain is loosed, the sails are spread,
 The living breath is fresh behind,
 As, with dews and sunrise fed,
 Comes the laughing morning wind;—
 The sails are full, the boat makes head
 Against the Serchio's torrent fierce,
 Then flags with intermitting course,

90

58-61 List, my dear fellow, the breeze blows fair;
 How it scatters Dominic's long black hair!
 Singing of us, and our lazy motions,
 If I can guess a boat's emotions.'—*edd.* 1824, 1839.

61-67 Rossetti places these lines conjecturally between ll. 51 and 52.

And hangs upon the wave, and stems

95

The tempest of the . . .

Which fervid from its mountain source

Shallow, smooth and strong doth come,—

Swift as fire, tempestuously

It sweeps into the affrighted sea

100

In morning's smile its eddies coil,

Its billows sparkle, toss and boil,

Torturing all its quiet light

Into columns fierce and bright.

The Serchio, twisting forth

105

Between the marble barriers which it clove

At Ripafratta, leads through the dread chasm

The wave that died the death which lovers love,

Living in what it sought; as if this spasm

Had not yet passed, the toppling mountains cling,

110

But the clear stream in full enthusiasm

Pours itself on the plain, then wandering

Down one clear path of effluence crystalline

Sends its superfluous waves, that they may fling

At Arno's feet tribute of corn and wine;

115

Then, through the pestilential deserts wild

Of tangled marsh and woods of stunted pine,

It rushes to the Ocean.

MUSIC

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

I

I PANT for the music which is divine,

My heart in its thirst is a dying flower;

Pour forth the sound like enchanted wine,

Loosen the notes in a silver shower;

Like a herbless plain, for the gentle rain,

5

I gasp, I faint, till they wake again.

II

Let me drink of the spirit of that sweet sound,

More, oh more,—I am thirsting yet;

It loosens the serpent which care has bound

Upon my heart to stifle it;

10

The dissolving strain, through every vein,

Passes into my heart and brain.

III

As the scent of a violet withered up,

Which grew by the brink of a silver lake,

95, 96 and stems The tempest of the wanting in *edd.* 1824, 1839. 112 then *Boscombe MS.*;
until *edd.* 1824, 1839. 114 superfluous *Boscombe MS.*; clear *edd.* 1824, 1839. 117 pine
Boscombe MS.; fir *edd.* 1824, 1839.

When the hot noon has drained its dewy cup,
 And mist there was none its thirst to slake—
 And the violet lay dead while the odour flew
 On the wings of the wind o'er the waters blue—

15

IV

As one who drinks from a charmed cup
 Of foaming, and sparkling, and murmuring wine,
 Whom, a mighty Enchantress filling up,
 Invites to love with her kiss divine . . .

20

SONNET TO BYRON

[Published by Medwin, *The Shelley Papers*, 1832 (ll. 1-7), and *Life of Shelley*, 1847 (ll. 1-9, 12-14). Revised and completed from the Boscombe MS. by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870.]

[I AM afraid these verses will not please you, but]
 If I esteemed you less, Envy would kill
 Pleasure, and leave to Wonder and Despair
 The ministration of the thoughts that fill
 The mind which, like a worm whose life may share
 A portion of the unapproachable,
 Marks your creations rise as fast and fair
 As perfect worlds at the Creator's will.
 But such is my regard that nor your power
 To soar above the heights where others [climb],
 Nor fame, that shadow of the unborn hour
 Cast from the envious future on the time,
 Move one regret for his unhonoured name
 Who dares these words:—the worm beneath the sod
 May lift itself in homage of the God.

5

10

FRAGMENT¹ ON KEATS

WHO DESIRED THAT ON HIS TOMB SHOULD BE INSCRIBED—

'HERE lieth One whose name was writ on water.'

But, ere the breath that could erase it blew,
 Death, in remorse for that fell slaughter,
 Death, the immortalizing winter, flew
 Athwart the stream,—and time's printless torrent grew
 A scroll of crystal, blazoning the name
 Of Adonais!

5

Music.—16 mist 1824; tank 1839, 2nd ed. *Sonnet to Byron.*—1 you ed. 1870; him 1832; thee 1847. 4 So ed. 1870; My soul which as a worm may haply share 1832; My soul which even as a worm may share 1847. 6 your ed. 1870; his 1832; thy 1847. 8, 9 So ed. 1870: wanting 1832;

But not the blessings of thy happier lot,
 Nor thy well-won prosperity, and fame 1847.

10, 11 So ed. 1870; wanting 1832, 1847. 12-14 So 1847, ed. 1870; wanting 1832.

¹ Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.—ED.

FRAGMENT: 'METHOUGHT I WAS A BILLOW
IN THE CROWD'[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870.]

METHOUGHT I was a billow in the crowd

Of common men, that stream without a shore,
That ocean which at once is deaf and loud ;

That I, a man, stood amid many more

By a wayside . . . , which the aspect bore
Of some imperial metropolis,Where mighty shapes—pyramid, dome, and tower—
Gleamed like a pile of crags—

5

TO-MORROW

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

WHERE art thou, beloved To-morrow ?

When young and old, and strong and weak,
Rich and poor, through joy and sorrow,

Thy sweet smiles we ever seek,—

In thy place—ah ! well-a-day !

We find the thing we fled—To-day.

5

STANZA

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870. Connected by Dowden
with the preceding.]

If I walk in Autumn's even

While the dead leaves pass,

If I look on Spring's soft heaven,—

Something is not there which was.

Winter's wondrous frost and snow,

Summer's clouds, where are they now ?

5

FRAGMENT: A WANDERER

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.]

HE wanders, like a day-appearing dream,

Through the dim wildernesses of the mind ;

Through desert woods and tracts, which seem

Like ocean, homeless, boundless, unconfined.

FRAGMENT: LIFE ROUNDED WITH SLEEP

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.]

THE babe is at peace within the womb ;

The corpse is at rest within the tomb :

We begin in what we end.

FRAGMENT: 'I FAINT, I PERISH WITH MY
LOVE!'

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870.]

I FAINT, I perish with my love! I grow
Frail as a cloud whose [splendours] pale
Under the evening's ever-changing glow:
I die like mist upon the gale,
And like a wave under the calm I fail.

5

FRAGMENT: THE LADY OF THE SOUTH

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870.]

FAINT with love, the Lady of the South
Lay in the paradise of Lebanon
Under a heaven of cedar boughs: the drouth
Of love was on her lips; the light was gone
Out of her eyes—

5

FRAGMENT: ZEPHYRUS THE AWAKENER

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870.]

COME, thou awakener of the spirit's ocean,
Zephyr, whom to thy cloud or cave
No thought can trace! speed with thy gentle motion!

FRAGMENT: RAIN

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870.]

THE gentleness of rain was in the wind.

FRAGMENT: 'WHEN SOFT WINDS AND SUNNY
SKIES'

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.]

WHEN soft winds and sunny skies
With the green earth harmonize,
And the young and dewy dawn,
Bold as an unhunted fawn,
Up the windless heaven is gone,—
Laugh—for ambushed in the day,—
Clouds and whirlwinds watch their prey.

5

FRAGMENT: 'AND THAT I WALK THUS
PROUDLY CROWNED'

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.]

AND that I walk thus proudly crowned withal
Is that 'tis my distinction; if I fall,
I shall not weep out of the vital day,
To-morrow dust, nor wear a dull decay.

FRAGMENT: 'THE RUDE WIND IS SINGING'

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.]

THE rude wind is singing
 The dirge of the music dead;
 The cold worms are clinging
 Where kisses were lately fed,

FRAGMENT: 'GREAT SPIRIT'

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870.]

GREAT Spirit whom the sea of boundless thought
 Nurtures within its unimagined caves,
 In which thou sittest sole, as in my mind,
 Giving a voice to its mysterious waves—

FRAGMENT: 'O THOU IMMORTAL DEITY'

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.]

O THOU immortal deity
 Whose throne is in the depth of human thought,
 I do adjure thy power and thee
 By all that man may be, by all that he is not,
 By all that he has been and yet must be!

5

FRAGMENT: THE FALSE LAUREL AND THE TRUE

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.]

'WHAT art thou, Presumptuous, who profanest
 The wreath to mighty poets only due,
 Even whilst like a forgotten moon thou wanest?
 Touch not those leaves which for the eternal few
 Who wander o'er the Paradise of fame,
 In sacred dedication ever grew:
 One of the crowd thou art without a name.'
 'Ah, friend, 'tis the false laurel that I wear;
 Bright though it seem, it is not the same
 As that which bound Milton's immortal hair;
 Its dew is poison; and the hopes that quicken
 Under its chilling shade, though seeming fair,
 Are flowers which die almost before they sicken.'

5

10

FRAGMENT: MAY THE LIMNER

[This and the three following Fragments were edited from *MS. Shelley D 1* at the Bodleian Library and published by Mr. C. D. Locock, *Examination, &c.*, Oxford, Clarendon Press, 1903. They are printed here as belonging probably to the year 1821.]

WHEN May is painting with her colours gay
 The landscape sketched by April her sweet twin . . .

FRAGMENT: BEAUTY'S HALO

[Published by Mr. C. D. Locock, *Examination*, &c., 1903.]

THY beauty hangs around thee like
 Splendour around the moon—
 Thy voice, as silver bells that strike
 Upon

FRAGMENT: 'THE DEATH KNELL IS RINGING'¹[Published by Mr. C. D. Locock, *Examination*, &c., 1903.]

THE death knell is ringing
 The raven is singing
 The earth worm is creeping
 The mourners are weeping
 Ding dong, bell—

5

FRAGMENT: 'I STOOD UPON A HEAVEN-CLEAVING
TURRET'

I stood upon a heaven-cleaving turret
 Which overlooked a wide Metropolis—
 And in the temple of my heart my Spirit
 Lay prostrate, and with parted lips did kiss
 The dust of Desolations [altar] hearth—
 And with a voice too faint to falter
 It shook that trembling fane with its weak prayer
 'Twas noon,—the sleeping skies were blue
 The city

5

NOTE ON POEMS OF 1821, BY MRS. SHELLEY

My task becomes inexpressibly painful as the year draws near that which sealed our earthly fate, and each poem, and each event it records, has a real or mysterious connexion with the fatal catastrophe. I feel that I am incapable of putting on paper the history of those times. The heart of the man, abhorred of the poet, who could

‘peep and botanize
 Upon his mother's grave,’

does not appear to me more inexplicably framed than that of one who can dissect and probe past woes, and repeat to the public ear the groans drawn from them in the throes of their agony.

The year 1821 was spent in Pisa, or at the Baths of San Giuliano. We were not, as our wont had been, alone; friends had gathered round us. Nearly all are dead, and, when Memory recurs to the past, she wanders among tombs. The genius, with all his blighting errors and mighty powers; the companion of Shelley's ocean-wanderings, and the sharer of his fate, than whom no man ever existed more gentle, generous, and fearless; and others, who found in Shelley's society,

¹ 'This reads like a study for *Autumn*, *A Dirge*' (Locock). Might it not be part of a projected *Fil v. of The Fugitives*?—ED.

and in his great knowledge and warm sympathy, delight, instruction, and solace; have joined him beyond the grave. A few survive who have felt life a desert since he left it. What misfortune can equal death? Change can convert every other into a blessing, or heal its sting—death alone has no cure. It shakes the foundations of the earth on which we tread; it destroys its beauty; it casts down our shelter; it exposes us bare to desolation. When those we love have passed into eternity, 'life is the desert and the solitude' in which we are forced to linger—but never find comfort more.

There is much in the *Adonais* which seems now more applicable to Shelley himself than to the young and gifted poet whom he mourned. The poetic view he takes of death, and the lofty scorn he displays towards his calumniators, are as a prophecy on his own destiny when received among immortal names, and the poisonous breath of critics has vanished into emptiness before the fame he inherits.

Shelley's favourite taste was boating; when living near the Thames or by the Lake of Geneva, much of his life was spent on the water. On the shore of every lake or stream or sea near which he dwelt, he had a boat moored. He had latterly enjoyed this pleasure again. There are no pleasure-boats on the Arno; and the shallowness of its waters (except in winter-time, when the stream is too turbid and impetuous for boating) rendered it difficult to get any skiff light enough to float. Shelley, however, overcame the difficulty; he, together with a friend, contrived a boat such as the huntsmen carry about with them in the Maremma, to cross the sluggish but deep streams that intersect the forests,—a boat of laths and pitched canvas. It held three persons; and he was often seen on the Arno in it, to the horror of the Italians, who remonstrated on the danger, and could not understand how any one could take pleasure in an exercise that risked life. 'Ma va per la vita!' they exclaimed. I little thought how true their words would prove. He once ventured, with a friend, on the glassy sea of a calm day, down the Arno and round the coast to Leghorn, which, by keeping close in shore, was very practicable. They returned to Pisa by the canal, when, missing the direct cut, they got entangled among weeds, and the boat upset; a wetting was all the harm done, except that the intense cold of his drenched clothes made Shelley faint. Once I went down with him to the mouth of the Arno, where the stream, then high and swift, met the tideless sea, and disturbed its sluggish waters. It was a waste and dreary scene; the desert sand stretched into a point surrounded by waves that broke idly though perpetually around; it was a scene very similar to Lido, of which he had said—

I love all waste
And solitary places; where we taste
The pleasure of believing what we see
Is boundless, as we wish our souls to be:
And such was this wide ocean, and this shore
More barren than its billows.'

Our little boat was of greater use, unaccompanied by any danger, when we removed to the Baths. Some friends lived at the village of Pugnano, four miles off, and we went to and fro to see them, in our boat, by the canal; which, fed by the Serchio, was, though an artificial, a full and picturesque stream, making its way under verdant banks, sheltered by trees that dipped their boughs into the murmuring waters. By day, multitudes of ephemera darted to and fro on the surface; at night, the fireflies came out among the shrubs on the banks; the cicale at noon-day kept up their hum; the aziola cooed in the quiet evening. It

was a pleasant summer, bright in all but Shelley's health and inconstant spirits; yet he enjoyed himself greatly, and became more and more attached to the part of the country where chance appeared to cast us. Sometimes he projected taking a farm situated on the height of one of the near hills, surrounded by chestnut and pine woods, and overlooking a wide extent of country: or settling still farther in the maritime Apennines, at Massa. Several of his slighter and unfinished poems were inspired by these scenes, and by the companions around us. It is the nature of that poetry, however, which overflows from the soul oftener to express sorrow and regret than joy; for it is when oppressed by the weight of life, and away from those he loves, that the poet has recourse to the solace of expression in verse.

Still, Shelley's passion was the ocean; and he wished that our summers, instead of being passed among the hills near Pisa, should be spent on the shores of the sea. It was very difficult to find a spot. We shrank from Naples from a fear that the heats would disagree with Percy: Leghorn had lost its only attraction, since our friends who had resided there were returned to England; and, Monte Nero being the resort of many English, we did not wish to find ourselves in the midst of a colony of chance travellers. No one then thought it possible to reside at Via Reggio, which latterly has become a summer resort. The low lands and bad air of Maremma stretch the whole length of the western shores of the Mediterranean, till broken by the rocks and hills of Spezia. It was a vague idea, but Shelley suggested an excursion to Spezia, to see whether it would be feasible to spend a summer there. The beauty of the bay enchanted him. We saw no house to suit us; but the notion took root, and many circumstances, enchained as by fatality, occurred to urge him to execute it.

He looked forward this autumn with great pleasure to the prospect of a visit from Leigh Hunt. When Shelley visited Lord Byron at Ravenna, the latter had suggested his coming out, together with the plan of a periodical work in which they should all join. Shelley saw a prospect of good for the fortunes of his friend, and pleasure in his society; and instantly exerted himself to have the plan executed. He did not intend himself joining in the work: partly from pride, not wishing to have the air of acquiring readers for his poetry by associating it with the compositions of more popular writers; and also because he might feel shackled in the free expression of his opinions, if any friends were to be compromised. By those opinions, carried even to their utmost extent, he wished to live and die, as being in his conviction not only true, but such as alone would conduce to the moral improvement and happiness of mankind. The sale of the work might meanwhile, either really or supposedly, be injured by the free expression of his thoughts; and this evil he resolved to avoid.

POEMS WRITTEN IN 1822

THE ZUCCA

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824, and dated 'January, 1822.'
There is a copy amongst the Boscombe MSS.]

I

SUMMER was dead and Autumn was expiring,
And infant Winter laughed upon the land
All cloudlessly and cold;—when I, desiring
More in this world than any understand,

Wept o'er the beauty, which, like sea retiring,
 Had left the earth bare as the wave-worn sand
 Of my lorn heart, and o'er the grass and flowers
 Pale for the falsehood of the flattering Hours.

II

Summer was dead, but I yet lived to weep
 The instability of all but weeping;
 And on the Earth lulled in her winter sleep
 I woke, and envied her as she was sleeping.
 Too happy Earth! over thy face shall creep
 The wakening vernal airs, until thou, leaping
 From unremembered dreams, shalt see
 No death divide thy immortality.

III

I loved—oh, no, I mean not one of ye,
 Or any earthly one, though ye are dear
 As human heart to human heart may be;—
 I loved, I know not what—but this low sphere
 And all that it contains, contains not thee,
 Thou, whom, seen nowhere, I feel everywhere.
 From Heaven and Earth, and all that in them are,
 Veiled art thou, like a star.

IV

By Heaven and Earth, from all whose shapes thou flowest,
 Neither to be contained, delayed, nor hidden;
 Making divine the loftiest and the lowest,
 When for a moment thou art not forbidden
 To live within the life which thou bestowest;
 And leaving noblest things vacant and chidden,
 Cold as a corpse after the spirit's flight,
 Blank as the sun after the birth of night.

V

In winds, and trees, and streams, and all things common,
 In music and the sweet unconscious tone
 Of animals, and voices which are human,
 Meant to express some feelings of their own;
 In the soft motions and rare smile of woman,
 In flowers and leaves, and in the grass fresh-shown,
 Or dying in the autumn, I the most
 Adore thee present or lament thee lost.

VI

And thus I went lamenting, when I saw
 A plant upon the river's margin lie,

7 lorn *Boscombe MS.*; poor *ed.* 1824. 23 So *Boscombe MS.*; Dim object of my soul's
 idolatry *ed.* 1824. 24 star *Boscombe MS.*; wanting *ed.* 1824. 38 grass fresh
Boscombe MS.; fresh grass *ed.* 1824.

Like one who loved beyond his nature's law,
 And in despair had cast him down to die;
 Its leaves, which had outlived the frost, the thaw
 Had blighted; like a heart which hatred's eye
 Can blast not, but which pity kills; the dew
 Lay on its spotted leaves like tears too true.

45

VII

The Heavens had wept upon it, but the Earth
 Had crushed it on her unmaternal breast

50

VIII

I bore it to my chamber, and I planted
 It in a vase full of the lightest mould;
 The winter beams which out of Heaven slanted
 Fell through the window-panes, disrobed of cold,
 Upon its leaves and flowers; the stars which panted
 In evening for the Day, whose car has rolled
 Over the horizon's wave, with looks of light
 Smiled on it from the threshold of the night.

55

IX

The mitigated influences of air
 And light revived the plant, and from it grew
 Strong leaves and tendrils, and its flowers fair,
 Full as a cup with the vine's burning dew,
 O'erflowed with golden colours; an atmosphere
 Of vital warmth enfolded it anew,
 And every impulse sent to every part
 The unbeheld pulsations of its heart.

60

65

X

Well might the plant grow beautiful and strong,
 Even if the air and sun had smiled not on it;
 For one wept o'er it all the winter long
 Tears pure as Heaven's rain, which fell upon it
 Hour after hour; for sounds of softest song
 Mixed with the stringèd melodies that won it
 To leave the gentle lips on which it slept,
 Had loosed the heart of him who sat and wept.

70

XI

Had loosed his heart, and shook the leaves and flowers
 On which he wept, the while the savage storm
 Waked by the darkest of December's hours
 Was raving round the chamber hushed and warm;

75

The birds were shivering in their leafless bowers,
 The fish were frozen in the pools, the form
 Of every summer plant was dead . . .
 Whilst this . . .

30

THE MAGNETIC LADY TO HER PATIENT

[Published by Medwin, *The Athenæum*, August 11, 1832. There is a copy amongst the Trelawny MSS.]

I

'SLEEP, sleep on! forget thy pain;
 My hand is on thy brow,
 My spirit on thy brain;
 My pity on thy heart, poor friend;
 And from my fingers flow 5
 The powers of life, and like a sign,
 Seal thee from thine hour of woe;
 And brood on thee, but may not blend
 With thine.

II

'Sleep, sleep on! I love thee not; 10
 But when I think that he
 Who made and makes my lot
 As full of flowers as thine of weeds,
 Might have been lost like thee;
 And that a hand which was not
 mine 15
 Might then have charmed his agony
 As I another's—my heart bleeds
 For thine.

III

'Sleep, sleep, and with the slumber of
 The dead and the unborn 20
 Forget thy life and love;
 Forget that thou must wake forever;
 Forget the world's dull scorn;

Forget lost health, and the divine
 Feelings which died in youth's brief
 morn; 25
 And forget me, for I can never
 Be thine.

IV

'Like a cloud big with a May shower,
 My soul weeps healing rain
 On thee, thou withered flower! 30
 It breathes mute music on thy sleep;
 Its odour calms thy brain!
 Its light within thy gloomy breast
 Spreads like a second youth again.
 By mine thy being is to its deep 35
 Possessed.

V

'The spell is done. How feel you
 now?'
 'Better—Quite well,' replied
 The sleeper.—'What would do 39
 You good when suffering and awake?
 What cure your head and side?—'
 'What would cure, that would kill me,
 Jane:
 And as I must on earth abide
 Awhile, yet tempt me not to break
 My chain.' 45

LINES: 'WHEN THE LAMP IS SHATTERED'

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. There is a copy amongst the Trelawny MSS.]

I

WHEN the lamp is shattered
 The light in the dust lies dead—

When the cloud is scattered
 The rainbow's glory is shed.
 When the lute is broken, 5

1, 10 Sleep *Trelawny MS.*, 1839, 2nd ed.; Sleep on 1832, 1839, 1st ed.
Trelawny MS.; chased 1832, edd. 1839. 21 love] woe 1832.

16 charmed
 42 so *Trelawny MS.*;

'Twould kill me what would cure my pain 1832, edd. 1839.

Sweet tones are remembered not ;
 When the lips have spoken,
 Loved accents are soon forgot.

II

As music and splendour
 Survive not the lamp and the lute, 10
 The heart's echoes render
 No song when the spirit is mute :—
 No song but sad dirges,
 Like the wind through a ruined cell,
 Or the mournful surges 15
 That ring the dead seaman's knell.

III

When hearts have once mingled
 Love first leaves the well-built nest ;

The weak one is singled
 To endure what it once possessed. 20
 O Love ! who bewailest
 The frailty of all things here,
 Why choose you the frailest
 For your cradle, your home, and your
 bier ?

IV

Its passions will rock thee 25
 As the storms rock the ravens on high ;
 Bright reason will mock thee,
 Like the sun from a wintry sky,
 From thy nest every rafter
 Will rot, and thine eagle home 30
 Leave thee naked to laughter,
 When leaves fall and cold winds come.

TO JANE: THE INVITATION

[This and the following poem were published together in their original form as one piece under the title, *The Pine Forest of the Cascine near Pisa*, by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824; reprinted in the same shape, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.; republished separately in their present form, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed. There is a copy amongst the Trelawny MSS.]

BEST and brightest, come away !
 Fairer far than this fair Day,
 Which, like thee to those in sorrow,
 Comes to bid a sweet good-morrow
 To the rough Year just awake 5
 In its cradle on the brake.
 The brightest hour of unborn Spring,
 Through the winter wandering,
 Found, it seems, the halcyon Morn
 To hoar February born. 10
 Bending from Heaven, in azure mirth,
 It kissed the forehead of the Earth,
 And smiled upon the silent sea,
 And bade the frozen streams be free,
 And waked to music all their foun-
 tains, 15
 And breathed upon the frozen moun-
 tains,
 And like a prophetess of May
 Strewed flowers upon the barren way,
 Making the wintry world appear
 Like one on whom thou smilest,
 dear. 20

Away, away, from men and towns,
 To the wild wood and the downs—
 To the silent wilderness
 Where the soul need not repress
 Its music lest it should not find 25
 An echo in another's mind,
 While the touch of Nature's art
 Harmonizes heart to heart.
 I leave this notice on my door
 For each accustomed visitor :— 30
 'I am gone into the fields
 To take what this sweet hour yields ;—
 Reflection, you may come to-morrow,
 Sit by the fireside with Sorrow.—
 You with the unpaid bill, Despair,—
 You, tiresome verse-reciter, Care,— 36
 I will pay you in the grave,—
 Death will listen to your stave,
 Expectation too, be off !
 To-day is for itself enough ; 40
 Hope, in pity mock not Woe
 With smiles, nor follow where I go ;
 Long having lived on thy sweet food,

6 tones ed. 1824; notes *Trelawny MS.* 14 through ed. 1824; in *Trelawny MS.* 16 dead ed. 1824; lost *Trelawny MS.* 23 choose ed. 1824; chose *Trelawny MS.* 25-32 wanting *Trelawny MS.* To Jane: *The Invitation*.—34 with *Trelawny MS.*; of 1839, 2nd ed.

At length I find one moment's good
 After long pain—with all your love,
 This you never told me of.' 46
 Radiant Sister of the Day,
 Awake! arise! and come away!
 To the wild woods and the plains,
 And the pools where winter rains 50
 Image all their roof of leaves,
 Where the pine its garland weaves
 Of sapless green and ivy dun
 Round stems that never kiss the sun;
 Where the lawns and pastures be, 55
 And the sandhills of the sea;—

Where the melting hoar-frost wets
 The daisy-star that never sets,
 And wind-flowers, and violets,
 Which yet join not scent to hue, 60
 Crown the pale year weak and new;
 When the night is left behind
 In the deep east, dun and blind,
 And the blue noon is over us,
 And the multitudinous 65
 Billows murmur at our feet,
 Where the earth and ocean meet,
 And all things seem only one
 In the universal sun.

TO JANE: THE RECOLLECTION

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed. See the Editor's prefatory note to the preceding.]

I

Now the last day of many days,
 All beautiful and bright as thou,
 The loveliest and the last, is dead,
 Rise, Memory, and write its praise!
 Up,—to thy wonted work! come,
 trace 5
 The epitaph of glory fled,—
 For now the Earth has changed its
 face,
 A frown is on the Heaven's brow.

Tortured by storms to shapes as rude
 As serpents interlaced,
 And soothed by every azure breath, 25
 That under Heaven is blown,
 To harmonies and hues beneath,
 As tender as its own;
 Now all the tree-tops lay asleep,
 Like green waves on the sea, 30
 As still as in the silent deep
 The ocean woods may be.

IV

II
 We wandered to the Pine Forest
 That skirts the Ocean's foam, 10
 The lightest wind was in its nest,
 The tempest in its home.
 The whispering waves were half asleep,
 The clouds were gone to play,
 And on the bosom of the deep 15
 The smile of Heaven lay;
 It seemed as if the hour were one
 Sent from beyond the skies,
 Which scattered from above the sun
 A light of Paradise. 20

How calm it was!—the silence there
 By such a chain was bound
 That even the busy woodpecker 35
 Made stiller by her sound
 The inviolable quietness;
 The breath of peace we drew
 With its soft motion made not less
 The calm that round us grew. 40
 There seemed from the remotest seat
 Of the white mountain waste,
 To the soft flower beneath our feet,
 A magic circle traced,—
 A spirit interfused around, 45
 A thrilling, silent life,—
 To momentary peace it bound
 Our mortal nature's strife;
 And still I felt the centre of

III

We paused amid the pines that stood
 The giants of the waste,

44 moment's *Trelawny MS.*; moment 1839, 2nd ed. 50 And *Trelawny MS.*; To 1839,
 2nd ed. 53 dun *Trelawny MS.*; dim 1839, 2nd ed. To *Jane: The Recollection.*—6 fled
 ed. 1824; dead *Trelawny MS.*, 1839, 2nd ed. 10 Ocean's] Ocean 1839, 2nd ed. 42 white
Trelawny MS.; wide 1839, 2nd ed.

The magic circle there 50
Was one fair form that filled with love
The lifeless atmosphere.

v

We paused beside the pools that lie
Under the forest bough,—
Each seemed as 'twere a little sky 55
Gulfed in a world below;
A firmament of purple light
Which in the dark earth lay,
More boundless than the depth of
night,
And purer than the day— 60
In which the lovely forests grew,
As in the upper air,
More perfect both in shape and hue
Than any spreading there.
There lay the glade and neighbouring
lawn, 65
And through the dark green wood
The white sun twinkling like the dawn

Out of a speckled cloud.
Sweet views which in our world above
Can never well be seen, 70
Were imaged by the water's love
Of that fair forest green.
And all was interfused beneath
With an Elysian glow,
An atmosphere without a breath, 75
A softer day below.
Like one beloved the scene had lent
To the dark water's breast,
Its every leaf and lineament
With more than truth expressed; 80
Until an envious wind crept by,
Like an unwelcome thought,
Which from the mind's too faithful
eye
Blots one dear image out.
Though thou art ever fair and kind, 85
The forests ever green,
Less oft is peace in Shelley's mind,
Than calm in waters, seen,

THE PINE FOREST OF THE CASCINE NEAR PISA

[This, the first draft of *To Jane: The Invitation, The Recollection*, was published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824, and reprinted, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed. See Editor's Prefatory Note to *The Invitation*, p. 668, above.]

DEAREST, best and brightest,
Come away,
To the woods and to the fields!
Dearer than this fairest day
Which, like thee to those in sorrow, 5
Comes to bid a sweet good-morrow
To the rough Year just awake
In its cradle in the brake.
The eldest of the Hours of Spring,
Into the Winter wandering, 10
Looks upon the leafless wood,
And the banks all bare and rude;
Found, it seems, this halcyon Morn
In February's bosom born,
Bending from Heaven, in azure
mirth, 15
Kissed the cold forehead of the Earth,
And smiled upon the silent sea,
And bade the frozen streams be free;
And waked to music all the fountains,

And breathed upon the rigid moun-
tains, 20
And made the wintry world appear
Like one on whom thou smilest, Dear
Radiant Sister of the Day,
Awake! arise! and come away!
To the wild woods and the plains, 25
To the pools where winter rains
Image all the roof of leaves,
Where the pine its garland weaves
Sapless, gray, and ivy dun
Round stems that never kiss the
sun— 30
To the sandhills of the sea,
Where the earliest violets be.
Now the last day of many days,
All beautiful and bright as thou,
The loveliest and the last, is dead, 35
Rise, Memory, and write its praise!

And do thy wonted work and trace
 The epitaph of glory fled;
 For now the Earth has changed its
 face,
 A frown is on the Heaven's brow. 40

We wandered to the Pine Forest
 That skirts the Ocean's foam,
 The lightest wind was in its nest,
 The tempest in its home.

The whispering waves were half
 asleep, 45
 The clouds were gone to play,
 And on the woods, and on the deep
 The smile of Heaven lay.

It seemed as if the day were one
 Sent from beyond the skies, 50
 Which shed to earth above the sun
 A light of Paradise.

We paused amid the pines that
 stood,
 The giants of the waste,
 Tortured by storms to shapes as
 rude 55
 With stems like serpents interlaced.

How calm it was—the silence there
 By such a chain was bound,
 That even the busy woodpecker
 Made stiller by her sound 60

The inviolable quietness;
 The breath of peace we drew
 With its soft motion made not less
 The calm that round us grew.

It seemed that from the remotest
 seat 65
 Of the white mountain's waste
 To the bright flower beneath our feet,
 A magic circle traced;—

A spirit interfused around,
 A thinking, silent life; 70
 To momentary peace it bound
 Our mortal nature's strife;—

And still, it seemed, the centre of
 The magic circle there,
 Was one whose being filled with love
 The breathless atmosphere. 76

Were not the crocuses that grew
 Under that ilex-tree
 As beautiful in scent and hue
 As ever fed the bee? 80

We stood beneath the pools that lie
 Under the forest bough,
 And each seemed like a sky
 Gulfed in a world below;

A purple firmament of light 85
 Which in the dark earth lay,
 More boundless than the depth of
 night,
 And clearer than the day—

In which the massy forests grew
 As in the upper air, 90
 More perfect both in shape and hue
 Than any waving there.

Like one beloved the scene had lent
 To the dark water's breast
 Its every leaf and lineament 95
 With that clear truth expressed;

There lay far glades and neighbouring
 lawn,
 And through the dark green crowd
 The white sun twinkling like the
 dawn
 Under a speckled cloud. 100

Sweet views, which in our world
 above
 Can never well be seen,
 Were imaged by the water's love
 Of that fair forest green.

And all was interfused beneath 105
 With an Elysian air,
 An atmosphere without a breath,
 A silence sleeping there.

Until a wandering wind crept by,
 Like an unwelcome thought, 110
 Which from my mind's too faithful eye
 Blots thy bright image out.

For thou art good and dear and kind,
 The forest ever green,
 But less of peace in S——'s mind, 115
 Than calm in waters, seen.

WITH A GUITAR, TO JANE

[Published by Medwin, *The Athenæum*, Oct. 20, 1832; *Frazer's Magazine*, Jan. 1833. There is a copy amongst the Trelawny MSS.]

ARIEL to Miranda:—Take
 This slave of Music, for the sake
 Of him who is the slave of thee,
 And teach it all the harmony
 In which thou canst, and only thou, 5
 Make the delighted spirit glow,
 Till joy denies itself again,
 And, too intense, is turned to pain;
 For by permission and command
 Of thine own Prince Ferdinand, 10
 Poor Ariel sends this silent token
 Of more than ever can be spoken;
 Your guardian spirit, Ariel, who,
 From life to life, must still pursue
 Your happiness;—for thus alone 15
 Can Ariel ever find his own.
 From Prospero's enchanted cell,
 As the mighty verses tell,
 To the throne of Naples, he
 Lit you o'er the trackless sea,
 Flitting on, your prow before,
 Like a living meteor.
 When you die, the silent Moon,
 In her interlunar swoon,
 Is not sadder in her cell 25
 Than deserted Ariel.
 When you live again on earth,
 Like an unseen star of birth,
 Ariel guides you o'er the sea
 Of life from your nativity. 30
 Many changes have been run
 Since Ferdinand and you begun
 Your course of love, and Ariel still
 Has tracked your steps, and served
 your will;
 Now, in humbler, happier lot, 35
 This is all remembered not;
 And now, alas! the poor sprite is
 Imprisoned, for some fault of his,
 In a body like a grave;—
 From you he only dares to crave, 40
 For his service and his sorrow,
 A smile to-day, a song to-morrow.

The artist who this idol wrought,
 To echo all harmonious thought,
 Felled a tree, while on the steep 45
 The woods were in their winter sleep,
 Rocked in that repose divine
 On the wind-swept Apennine;
 And dreaming, some of Autumn past,
 And some of Spring approaching
 fast, 50
 And some of April buds and showers,
 And some of songs in July bowers,
 And all of love; and so this tree,—
 O that such our death may be!—
 Died in sleep, and felt no pain, 55
 To live in happier form again:
 From which, beneath Heaven's fairest
 star,
 The artist wrought this loved Guitar,
 And taught it justly to reply,
 To all who question skilfully, 60
 In language gentle as thine own;
 Whispering in enamoured tone
 Sweet oracles of woods and dells,
 And summer winds in sylvan cells;
 For it had learned all harmonies 65
 Of the plains and of the skies,
 Of the forests and the mountains,
 And the many-voicèd fountains;
 The clearest echoes of the hills,
 The softest notes of falling rills, 70
 The melodies of birds and bees,
 The murmuring of summer seas,
 And pattering rain, and breathing
 dew,
 And airs of evening; and it knew 74
 That seldom-heard mysterious sound,
 Which, driven on its diurnal round,
 As it floats through boundless day,
 Our world enkindles on its way.—
 All this it knows, but will not tell
 To those who cannot question well 80
 The Spirit that inhabits it;
 It talks according to the wit

12 Of more than ever] Of love that never 1833.

winds 1832, 1833, 1839, 1st ed.

1st ed.

46 woods *Trelawny MS.*, 1839, 2nd ed.

58 this *Trelawny MS.*, 1839, 2nd ed.; that 1832, 1833, 1839

61 thine own *Trelawny MS.*, 1839, 2nd ed.; its own 1832, 1833, 1839, 1st ed.

76 on *Trelawny MS.*, 1839, 2nd ed.; in 1832, 1833, 1839, 1st ed.

Of its companions; and no more
Is heard than has been felt before,
By those who tempt it to betray 85
These secrets of an elder day:

But, sweetly as its answers will
Flatter hands of perfect skill,
It keeps its highest, holiest tone
For our beloved Jane alone. 90

TO JANE: 'THE KEEN STARS WERE TWINKLING'

[Published in part (ll. 7-24) by Medwin (under the title, *An Ariette for Music. To a Lady singing to her Accompaniment on the Guitar*), *The Athenæum*, Nov. 17, 1832; reprinted by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed. Republished in full (under the title, *To —*), *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed. The Trelawny MS. is headed *To Jane*. Mr. C. W. Frederickson of Brooklyn possesses a transcript in an unknown hand.]

I

The keen stars were twinkling,
And the fair moon was rising among
them,
Dear Jane!
The guitar was tinkling,
But the notes were not sweet till you
sung them 5
Again.

II

As the moon's soft splendour
O'er the faint cold starlight of Heaven
Is thrown,
So your voice most tender 10
To the strings without soul had then
given
Its own.

III

The stars will awaken,
Though the moon sleep a full hour later,
To-night; 15
No leaf will be shaken
Whilst the dew of your melody
scatter
Delight.

IV

Though the sound overpowers,
Sing again, with your dear voice
revealing 20
A tone
Of some world far from ours,
Where music and moonlight and
feeling
Are one.

A DIRGE

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

Rough wind, that moanest loud
Grief too sad for song;
Wild wind, when sullen cloud
Knells all the night long;

Sad storm, whose tears are vain, 5
Bare woods, whose branches strain,
Deep caves and dreary main,—
Wail, for the world's wrong!

LINES WRITTEN IN THE BAY OF LERICI

[Published from the Boscombe MSS. by Dr. Garnett, *Macmillan's Magazine*, June, 1862; reprinted, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

SHE left me at the silent time
When the moon had ceased to climb
The azure path of Heaven's steep,

And like an albatross asleep,
Balanced on her wings of light, 5
Hovered in the purple night,

90 Jane *Trelawny MS.*; friend 1832, 1833, *edd.* 1839. *To Jane*.—3 Dear *** 1839, 2nd ed.
7 soft] pale *Fred. MS.* 10 your 1839, 2nd ed.; thy 1832, 1839, 1st ed., *Fred. MS.* 11 had then
1839, 2nd ed.; has 1832, 1839, 1st ed.; hath *Fred. MS.* 12 Its] Thine *Fred. MS.* 17 your
1839, 2nd ed.; thy 1832, 1839, 1st ed., *Fred. MS.* 19 sound] song *Fred. MS.* 20 your
dear 1839, 2nd ed.; thy sweet 1832, 1839, 1st ed.; thy soft *Fred. MS.* *A Dirge*.—6 strain *cj.*
Rossetti; stain ed. 1824.

Ere she sought her ocean nest
 In the chambers of the West.
 She left me, and I stayed alone
 Thinking over every tone 10
 Which, though silent to the ear,
 The enchanted heart could hear,
 Like notes which die when born, but
 still
 Haunt the echoes of the hill;
 And feeling ever—oh, too much!— 15
 The soft vibration of her touch,
 As if her gentle hand, even now,
 Lightly trembled on my brow;
 And thus, although she absent were,
 Memory gave me all of her 20
 That even Fancy dares to claim:—
 Her presence had made weak and
 tame
 All passions, and I lived alone
 In the time which is our own;
 The past and future were forgot, 25
 As they had been, and would be, not.
 But soon, the guardian angel gone,
 The daemon reassumed his throne
 In my faint heart. I dare not speak

My thoughts, but thus disturbed and
 weak 30
 I sat and saw the vessels glide
 Over the ocean bright and wide,
 Like spirit-wingèd chariots sent
 O'er some serenest element
 For ministrations strange and far; 35
 As if to some Elysian star
 Sailed for drink to medicine
 Such sweet and bitter pain as mine.
 And the wind that winged their flight
 From the land came fresh and light, 40
 And the scent of wingèd flowers,
 And the coolness of the hours
 Of dew, and sweet warmth left by day.
 Were scattered o'er the twinkling bay.
 And the fisher with his lamp 45
 And spear about the low rocks damp
 Crept, and struck the fish which came
 To worship the delusive flame.
 Too happy they, whose pleasures
 sought
 Extinguishes all sense and thought 50
 Of the regret that pleasure leaves,
 Destroying life alone, not peace!

LINES: 'WE MEET NOT AS WE PARTED'

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

I

WE meet not as we parted,
 We feel more than all may see;
 My bosom is heavy-hearted,
 And thine full of doubt for me:—
 One moment has bound the free. 5

II

That moment is gone for ever,
 Like lightning that flashed and
 died—
 Like a snowflake upon the river—
 Like a sunbeam upon the tide,
 Which the dark shadows hide. 10

III

That moment from time was singled
 As the first of a life of pain;

The cup of its joy was mingled
 —Delusion too sweet though vain!
 Too sweet to be mine again. 15

IV

Sweet lips, could my heart have
 hidden
 That its life was crushed by you,
 Ye would not have then forbidden
 The death which a heart so true
 Sought in your briny dew. 20

V

Methinks too little cost
 For a moment so found, so lost! 25

Lines written, &c.—II though silent *Relics* 1862; though now silent *Mac. Mag.* 1862. 31 saw
Relics 1862; watched *Mac. Mag.* 1862.

THE ISLE

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

THERE was a little lawny islet
 By anemone and violet,
 Like mosaic, paven:
 And its roof was flowers and leaves
 Which the summer's breath en-
 weaves, 5
 Where nor sun nor showers nor breeze

Pierce the pines and tallest trees,
 Each a gem engraven;—
 Girt by many an azure wave
 With which the clouds and mountains
 pave 10
 A lake's blue chasm.

FRAGMENT: TO THE MOON

[Published by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

BRIGHT wanderer, fair coquette of
 Heaven,
 To whom alone it has been given
 To change and be adored for ever,

Envy not this dim world, for never
 But once within its shadow grew
 One fair as —

EPITAPH

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

THESE are two friends whose lives
 were undivided;
 So let their memory be, now they
 have glided

Under the grave; let not their bones
 be parted,
 For their two hearts in life were
 single-hearted.

NOTE ON POEMS OF 1822, BY MRS. SHELLEY

THIS morn thy gallant bark
 Sailed on a sunny sea:
 'Tis noon, and tempests dark
 Have wrecked it on the lee.
 Ah woe! ah woe!

By Spirits of the deep
 Thou'rt cradled on the billow
 To thy eternal sleep.

Thou sleep'st upon the shore
 Beside the knelling surge,
 And Sea-nymphs evermore
 Shall sadly chant thy dirge.

They come, they come,
 The Spirits of the deep,—
 While near thy seaweed pillow
 My lonely watch I keep.

From far across the sea
 I hear a loud lament,
 By Echo's voice for thee
 From Ocean's caverns sent.
 O list! O list!

The Spirits of the deep!
 They raise a wail of sorrow,
 While I forever weep.

WITH this last year of the life of Shelley these Notes end. They are not what I intended them to be. I began with energy, and a burning desire to impart to the world, in worthy language, the sense I have of the virtues and genius of the beloved and the lost; my strength has failed under the task. Recurrence to the past, full of its own deep and unforgotten joys and sorrows, contrasted with succeeding years of painful and solitary struggle, has shaken my health. Days of great suffering have followed my attempts to write, and these again produced a weakness and languor that spread their sinister influence over these notes. I dislike speaking of myself, but cannot help apologizing to the dead, and to the

public, for not having executed in the manner I desired the history I engaged to give of Shelley's writings¹.

The winter of 1822 was passed in Pisa, if we might call that season winter in which autumn merged into spring after the interval of but few days of bleaker weather. Spring sprang up early, and with extreme beauty. Shelley had conceived the idea of writing a tragedy on the subject of Charles I. It was one that he believed adapted for a drama; full of intense interest, contrasted character, and busy passion. He had recommended it long before, when he encouraged me to attempt a play. Whether the subject proved more difficult than he anticipated, or whether in fact he could not bend his mind away from the broodings and wanderings of thought, divested from human interest, which he best loved, I cannot tell; but he proceeded slowly, and threw it aside for one of the most mystical of his poems, the *Triumph of Life*, on which he was employed at the last.

His passion for boating was fostered at this time by having among our friends several sailors. His favourite companion, Edward Ellerker Williams, of the 8th Light Dragoons, had begun his life in the navy, and had afterwards entered the army; he had spent several years in India, and his love for adventure and manly exercises accorded with Shelley's taste. It was their favourite plan to build a boat such as they could manage themselves, and, living on the sea-coast, to enjoy at every hour and season the pleasure they loved best. Captain Roberts, R.N., undertook to build the boat at Genoa, where he was also occupied in building the *Bolivar* for Lord Byron. Ours was to be an open boat, on a model taken from one of the royal dockyards. I have since heard that there was a defect in this model, and that it was never seaworthy. In the month of February, Shelley and his friend went to Spezia to seek for houses for us. Only one was to be found at all suitable; however, a trifle such as not finding a house could not stop Shelley; the one found was to serve for all. It was unfurnished; we sent our furniture by sea, and with a good deal of precipitation, arising from his impatience, made our removal. We left Pisa on the 26th of April.

The Bay of Spezia is of considerable extent, and divided by a rocky promontory into a larger and smaller one. The town of Lerici is situated on the eastern point, and in the depth of the smaller bay, which bears the name of this town, is the village of San Terenzo. Our house, Casa Magni, was close to this village; the sea came up to the door, a steep hill sheltered it behind. The proprietor of the estate on which it was situated was insane; he had begun to erect a large house at the summit of the hill behind, but his malady prevented its being finished, and it was falling into ruin. He had (and this to the Italians had seemed a glaring symptom of very decided madness) rooted up the olives on the hillside, and planted forest trees. These were mostly young, but the plantation was more in English taste than I ever elsewhere saw in Italy; some fine walnut and ilex trees intermingled their dark massy foliage, and formed groups which still haunt my memory, as then they satiated the eye with a sense of loveliness. The scene was indeed of

¹ I at one time feared that the correction of the press might be less exact through my illness; but I believe that it is nearly free from error. Some asterisks occur in a few pages, as they did in the volume of *Posthumous Poems*, either because they refer to private concerns, or because the original manuscript was left imperfect. Did any one see the papers from which I drew that volume, the wonder would be how any eyes or patience were capable of extracting it from so confused a mass, interlined and broken into fragments, so that the sense could only be deciphered and joined by guesses which might seem rather intuitive than founded on reasoning. Yet I believe no mistake was made.

unimaginable beauty. The blue extent of waters, the almost landlocked bay, the near castle of Lerici shutting it in to the east, and distant Porto Venere to the west; the varied forms of the precipitous rocks that bound in the beach, over which there was only a winding rugged footpath towards Lerici, and none on the other side; the tideless sea leaving no sands nor shingle, formed a picture such as one sees in Salvator Rosa's landscapes only. Sometimes the sunshine vanished when the sirocco raged—the 'ponente' the wind was called on that shore. The gales and squalls that hailed our first arrival surrounded the bay with foam; the howling wind swept round our exposed house, and the sea roared unremittingly, so that we almost fancied ourselves on board ship. At other times sunshine and calm invested sea and sky, and the rich tints of Italian heaven bathed the scene in bright and ever-varying tints.

The natives were wilder than the place. Our near neighbours of San Terenzo were more like savages than any people I ever before lived among. Many a night they passed on the beach, singing, or rather howling; the women dancing about among the waves that broke at their feet, the men leaning against the rocks and joining in their loud wild chorus. We could get no provisions nearer than Sarzana, at a distance of three miles and a half off, with the torrent of the Magra between; and even there the supply was very deficient. Had we been wrecked on an island of the South Seas, we could scarcely have felt ourselves farther from civilization and comfort; but, where the sun shines, the latter becomes an unnecessary luxury, and we had enough society among ourselves. Yet I confess housekeeping became rather a toilsome task, especially as I was suffering in my health, and could not exert myself actively.

At first the fatal boat had not arrived, and was expected with great impatience. On Monday, 12th May, it came. Williams records the long-wished-for fact in his journal: 'Cloudy and threatening weather. M. Maglian called; and after dinner, and while walking with him on the terrace, we discovered a strange sail coming round the point of Porto Venere, which proved at length to be Shelley's boat. She had left Genoa on Thursday last, but had been driven back by the prevailing bad winds. A Mr. Heslop and two English seamen brought her round, and they speak most highly of her performances. She does indeed excite my surprise and admiration. Shelley and I walked to Lerici, and made a stretch off the land to try her: and I find she fetches whatever she looks at. In short, we have now a perfect plaything for the summer.'—It was thus that short-sighted mortals welcomed Death, he having disguised his grim form in a pleasing mask! The time of the friends was now spent on the sea; the weather became fine, and our whole party often passed the evenings on the water when the wind promised pleasant sailing. Shelley and Williams made longer excursions; they sailed several times to Massa. They had engaged one of the seamen who brought her round, a boy, by name Charles Vivian; and they had not the slightest apprehension of danger. When the weather was unfavourable, they employed themselves with alterations in the rigging, and by building a boat of canvas and reeds, as light as possible, to have on board the other for the convenience of landing in waters too shallow for the larger vessel. When Shelley was on board, he had his papers with him; and much of the *Triumph of Life* was written as he sailed or weltered on that sea which was soon to engulf him.

The heats set in in the middle of June; the days became excessively hot. But the sea-breeze cooled the air at noon, and extreme heat always put Shelley in spirits. A long drought had preceded the heat; and prayers for rain were being

put up in the churches, and processions of relics for the same effect took place in every town. At this time we received letters announcing the arrival of Leigh Hunt at Genoa. Shelley was very eager to see him. I was confined to my room by severe illness, and could not move; it was agreed that Shelley and Williams should go to Leghorn in the boat. Strange that no fear of danger crossed our minds! Living on the sea-shore, the ocean became as a plaything: as a child may sport with a lighted stick, till a spark inflames a forest, and spreads destruction over all, so did we fearlessly and blindly tamper with danger, and make a game of the terrors of the ocean. Our Italian neighbours, even, trusted themselves as far as Massa in the skiff; and the running down the line of coast to Leghorn gave no more notion of peril than a fair-weather inland navigation would have done to those who had never seen the sea. Once, some months before, Trelawny had raised a warning voice as to the difference of our calm bay and the open sea beyond; but Shelley and his friend, with their one sailor-boy, thought themselves a match for the storms of the Mediterranean, in a boat which they looked upon as equal to all it was put to do.

On the 1st of July they left us. If ever shadow of future ill darkened the present hour, such was over my mind when they went. During the whole of our stay at Lerici, an intense presentiment of coming evil brooded over my mind, and covered this beautiful place and genial summer with the shadow of coming misery. I had vainly struggled with these emotions—they seemed accounted for by my illness; but at this hour of separation they recurred with renewed violence. I did not anticipate danger for them, but a vague expectation of evil shook me to agony, and I could scarcely bring myself to let them go. The day was calm and clear; and, a fine breeze rising at twelve, they weighed for Leghorn. They made the run of about fifty miles in seven hours and a half. The *Bolivar* was in port; and, the regulations of the Health-office not permitting them to go on shore after sunset, they borrowed cushions from the larger vessel, and slept on board their boat.

They spent a week at Pisa and Leghorn. The want of rain was severely felt in the country. The weather continued sultry and fine. I have heard that Shelley all this time was in brilliant spirits. Not long before, talking of presentiment, he had said the only one that he ever found infallible was the certain advent of some evil fortune when he felt peculiarly joyous. Yet, if ever fate whispered of coming disaster, such inaudible but not unfelt prognostics hovered around us. The beauty of the place seemed unearthly in its excess: the distance we were at from all signs of civilization, the sea at our feet, its murmurs or its roaring for ever in our ears,—all these things led the mind to brood over strange thoughts, and, lifting it from everyday life, caused it to be familiar with the unreal. A sort of spell surrounded us; and each day, as the voyagers did not return, we grew restless and disquieted, and yet, strange to say, we were not fearful of the most apparent danger.

The spell snapped; it was all over; an interval of agonizing doubt—of days passed in miserable journeys to gain tidings, of hopes that took firmer root even as they were more baseless—was changed to the certainty of the death that eclipsed all happiness for the survivors for evermore.

There was something in our fate peculiarly harrowing. The remains of those we lost were cast on shore; but, by the quarantine-laws of the coast, we were not permitted to have possession of them—the law with respect to everything cast on land by the sea being that such should be burned, to prevent the

possibility of any remnant bringing the plague into Italy; and no representation could alter the law. At length, through the kind and unwearied exertions of Mr. Dawkins, our Chargé d'Affaires at Florence, we gained permission to receive the ashes after the bodies were consumed. Nothing could equal the zeal of Trelawny in carrying our wishes into effect. He was indefatigable in his exertions, and full of forethought and sagacity in his arrangements. It was a fearful task; he stood before us at last, his hands scorched and blistered by the flames of the funeral-pyre, and by touching the burnt relics as he placed them in the receptacles prepared for the purpose. And there, in compass of that small case, was gathered all that remained on earth of him whose genius and virtue were a crown of glory to the world—whose love had been the source of happiness, peace, and good,—to be buried with him!

The concluding stanzas of the *Adonais* pointed out where the remains ought to be deposited: in addition to which our beloved child lay buried in the cemetery at Rome. Thither Shelley's ashes were conveyed; and they rest beneath one of the antique weed-grown towers that recur at intervals in the circuit of the massy ancient wall of Rome. He selected the hallowed place himself; there is

‘the sepulchre,
Oh, not of him, but of our joy!—

And gray walls moulder round, on which dull Time
Feeds, like slow fire upon a hoary brand;
And one keen pyramid with wedge sublime,
Pavilions the dust of him who planned
This refuge for his memory, doth stand
Like flame transformed to marble; and beneath,
A field is spread, on which a newer band
Have pitched in Heaven's smile their camp of death,
Welcoming him we lose with scarce extinguished breath.’

Could sorrow for the lost, and shuddering anguish at the vacancy left behind, be soothed by poetic imaginations, there was something in Shelley's fate to mitigate pangs which yet, alas! could not be so mitigated; for hard reality brings too miserably home to the mourner all that is lost of happiness, all of lonely unsolaced struggle that remains. Still, though dreams and hues of poetry cannot blunt grief, it invests his fate with a sublime fitness, which those less nearly allied may regard with complacency. A year before he had poured into verse all such ideas about death as give it a glory of its own. He had, as it now seems, almost anticipated his own destiny; and, when the mind figures his skiff wrapped from sight by the thunder-storm, as it was last seen upon the purple sea, and then, as the cloud of the tempest passed away, no sign remained of where it had been¹—who but will regard as a prophecy the last stanza of the *Adonais*?

‘The breath whose might I have invoked in song
Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven,
Far from the shore, far from the trembling throng
Whose sails were never to the tempest given;

¹ Captain Roberts watched the vessel with his glass from the top of the lighthouse of Leghorn, on its homeward track. They were off Via Reggio, at some distance from shore, when a storm was driven over the sea. It enveloped them and several larger vessels in darkness. When the cloud passed onwards, Roberts looked again, and saw every other vessel sailing on the ocean except their little schooner, which had vanished. From that time he could scarcely doubt the fatal truth; yet we fancied that they might have been driven towards Elba or Corsica, and so be saved. The

The massy earth and spherèd skies are riven!
 I am borne darkly, fearfully, afar;
 Whilst burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,
 The soul of Adonais, like a star,
 Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.'

PUTNEY, May 1, 1839.

TRANSLATIONS

[Of the Translations that follow a few were published by Shelley himself, others by Mrs. Shelley in the *Posthumous Poems*, 1824, or the *Poetical Works*, 1839, and the remainder by Medwin (1834, 1847), Garnett (1862), Rossetti (1870), Forman (1876) and Locock (1903) from the MS. originals. Shelley's *Translations* fall between the years 1818 and 1822.]

HYMN TO MERCURY

TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK OF HOMER

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. This alone of the *Translations* is included in the Harvard MS. book. 'Fragments of the drafts of this and the other *Hymns* of Homer exist among the Boscombe MSS.' (Forman).]

I

SING, Muse, the son of Maia and of Jove,
 The Herald-child, king of Arcadia
 And all its pastoral hills, whom in sweet love
 Having been interwoven, modest May
 Bore Heaven's dread Supreme. An antique grove
 Shadowed the cavern where the lovers lay
 In the deep night, unseen by Gods or Men,
 And white-armed Juno slumbered sweetly then.

5

II

Now, when the joy of Jove had its fulfilling,
 And Heaven's tenth moon chronicled her relief,
 She gave to light a babe all babes excelling,
 A schemer subtle beyond all belief;
 A shepherd of thin dreams, a cow-stealing,
 A night-watching, and door-waylaying thief,
 Who 'mongst the Gods was soon about to thieve,
 And other glorious actions to achieve.

10

15

III

The babe was born at the first peep of day;
 He began playing on the lyre at noon,
 And the same evening did he steal away
 Apollo's herds;—the fourth day of the moon

20

13 cow-stealing] 9y. cattle-stealing?

observation made as to the spot where the boat disappeared caused it to be found, through the exertions of Trelawny for that effect. It had gone down in ten fathom water; it had not capsized, and, except such things as had floated from her, everything was found on board exactly as it had been placed when they sailed. The boat itself was uninjured. Roberts possessed himself of her, and decked her; but she proved not seaworthy, and her shattered planks now lie rotting on the shore of one of the Ionian islands, on which she was wrecked.

On which him bore the venerable May,
 From her immortal limbs he leaped full soon,
 Nor long could in the sacred cradle keep,
 But out to seek Apollo's herds would creep.

IV

Out of the lofty cavern wandering 25
 He found a tortoise, and cried out—'A treasure!'
 (For Mercury first made the tortoise sing)
 The beast before the portal at his leisure
 The flowery herbage was depasturing,
 Moving his feet in a deliberate measure 30
 Over the turf. Jove's profitable son
 Eying him laughed, and laughing thus begun:—

V

'A useful godsend are you to me now,
 King of the dance, companion of the feast,
 Lovely in all your nature! Welcome, you 35
 Excellent plaything! Where, sweet mountain-beast,
 Got you that speckled shell? Thus much I know,
 You must come home with me and be my guest;
 You will give joy to me, and I will do
 All that is in my power to honour you. 40

VI

'Better to be at home than out of door,
 So come with me; and though it has been said
 That you alive defend from magic power,
 I know you will sing sweetly when you're dead.' 45
 Thus having spoken, the quaint infant bore,
 Lifting it from the grass on which it fed
 And grasping it in his delighted hold,
 His treasured prize into the cavern old.

VII

Then scooping with a chisel of gray steel,
 He bored the life and soul out of the beast.— 50
 Not swifter a swift thought of woe or weal
 Darts through the tumult of a human breast
 Which thronging cares annoy—not swifter wheel
 The flashes of its torture and unrest
 Out of the dizzy eyes—than Maia's son 55
 All that he did devise hath featly done.

VIII

And through the tortoise's hard stony skin
 At proper distances small holes he made,
 And fastened the cut stems of reeds within,

57 stony *Boscombe MS., Harvard MS.; strong ed. 1824.*

And with a piece of leather overlaid
 The open space and fixed the cubits in,
 Fitting the bridge to both, and stretched o'er all
 Symphonious cords of sheep-gut rhythmical.

IX

When he had wrought the lovely instrument,
 He tried the chords, and made division meet,
 Preluding with the plectrum, and there went
 Up from beneath his hand a tumult sweet
 Of mighty sounds, and from his lips he sent
 A strain of unpremeditated wit
 Joyous and wild and wanton—such you may
 Hear among revellers on a holiday.

X

He sung how Jove and May of the bright sandal
 Dallied in love not quite legitimate;
 And his own birth, still scoffing at the scandal,
 And naming his own name, did celebrate;
 His mother's cave and servant maids he planned all
 In plastic verse, her household stuff and state,
 Perennial pot, trippet, and brazen pan,—
 But singing, he conceived another plan,

XI

Seized with a sudden fancy for fresh meat,
 He in his sacred crib deposited
 The hollow lyre, and from the cavern sweet
 Rushed with great leaps up to the mountain's head,
 Revolving in his mind some subtle feat
 Of thievish craft, such as a swindler might
 Devise in the lone season of dun night.

XII

Lo! the great Sun under the ocean's bed has
 Driven steeds and chariot—the child meanwhile strode
 O'er the Pierian mountains clothed in shadows,
 Where the immortal oxen of the God
 Are pastured in the flowering unmown meadows,
 And safely stalled in a remote abode.—
 The archer Argicide, elate and proud,
 Drove fifty from the herd, lowing aloud.

XIII

He drove them wandering o'er the sandy way,
 But, being ever mindful of his craft,
 Backward and forward drove he them astray,
 So that the tracks which seemed before, were aft;

His sandals then he threw to the ocean spray,
 And for each foot he wrought a kind of raft
 Of tamarisk, and tamarisk-like sprigs,
 And bound them in a lump with withy twigs.

100

XIV

And on his feet he tied these sandals light,
 The trail of whose wide leaves might not betray
 His track; and then, a self-sufficing wight,
 Like a man hastening on some distant way,
 He from Pieria's mountain bent his flight;
 But an old man perceived the infant pass
 Down green Onchestus heaped like beds with grass.

105

XV

The old man stood dressing his sunny vine:
 'Halloo! old fellow with the crookèd shoulder!
 You grub those stumps? before they will bear wine
 Methinks even you must grow a little older:
 Attend, I pray, to this advice of mine,
 As you would 'scape what might appal a bolder—
 Seeing, see not—and hearing, hear not—and—
 If you have understanding—understand.'

110

115

XVI

So saying, Hermes roused the oxen vast;
 O'er shadowy mountain and resounding dell,
 And flower-paven plains, great Hermes passed;
 Till the black night divine, which favouring fell
 Around his steps, grew gray, and morning fast
 Wakened the world to work, and from her cell
 Sea-strewn, the Pallantean Moon sublime
 Into her watch-tower just began to climb.

120

125

XVII

Now to Alpheus he had driven all
 The broad-foreheaded oxen of the Sun;
 They came unwearied to the lofty stall
 And to the water-troughs which ever run
 Through the fresh fields—and when with rushgrass tall,
 Lotus and all sweet herbage, every one
 Had pastured been, the great God made them move
 Towards the stall in a collected drove.

130

XVIII

A mighty pile of wood the God then heaped,
 And having soon conceived the mystery
 Of fire, from two smooth laurel branches stripped
 The bark, and rubbed them in his palms;—on high

135

Suddenly forth the burning vapour leaped
 And the divine child saw delightedly.—
 Mercury first found out for human weal
 Tinder-box, matches, fire-irons, flint and steel.

140

XIX

And fine dry logs and roots innumerable
 He gathered in a delve upon the ground—
 And kindled them—and instantaneous
 The strength of the fierce flame was breathed around :
 And whilst the might of glorious Vulcan thus
 Wrapped the great pile with glare and roaring sound,
 Hermes dragged forth two heifers, lowing loud,
 Close to the fire—such might was in the God.

145

XX

And on the earth upon their backs he threw
 The panting beasts, and rolled them o'er and o'er,
 And bored their lives out. Without more ado
 He cut up fat and flesh, and down before
 The fire, on spits of wood he placed the two,
 Toasting their flesh and ribs, and all the gore
 Pursued in the bowels ; and while this was done
 He stretched their hides over a craggy stone.

150

155

XXI

We mortals let an ox grow old, and then
 Cut it up after long consideration,—
 But joyous-minded Hermes from the glen
 Drew the fat spoils to the more open station
 Of a flat smooth space, and portioned them ; and when
 He had by lot assigned to each a ration
 Of the twelve Gods, his mind became aware
 Of all the joys which in religion are.

160

165

XXII

For the sweet savour of the roasted meat
 Tempted him though immortal. Natheless
 He checked his haughty will and did not eat,
 Though what it cost him words can scarce express,
 And every wish to put such morsels sweet
 Down his most sacred throat, he did repress ;
 But soon within the lofty portalled stall
 He placed the fat and flesh and bones and all.

170

XXIII

And every trace of the fresh butchery
 And cooking, the God soon made disappear,
 As if it all had vanished through the sky ;
 He burned the hoofs and horns and head and hair,—
 The insatiate fire devoured them hungrily ;—

175

And when he saw that everything was clear,
 He quenched the coal, and trampled the black dust, 180
 And in the stream his bloody sandals tossed.

XXIV

All night he worked in the serene moonshine—
 But when the light of day was spread abroad
 He sought his natal mountain-peaks divine.
 On his long wandering, neither Man nor God 185
 Had met him, since he killed Apollo's kine,
 Nor house-dog had barked at him on his road;
 Now he obliquely through the keyhole passed,
 Like a thin mist, or an autumnal blast.

XXV

Right through the temple of the spacious cave 190
 He went with soft light feet—as if his tread
 Fell not on earth; no sound their falling gave;
 Then to his cradle he crept quick, and spread
 The swaddling-clothes about him; and the knave
 Lay playing with the covering of the bed 195
 With his left hand about his knees—the right
 Held his belovèd tortoise-lyre tight.

XXVI

There he lay innocent as a new-born child,
 As gossips say; but though he was a God,
 The Goddess, his fair mother, unbeguiled, 200
 Knew all that he had done being abroad:
 'Whence come you, and from what adventure wild,
 You cunning rogue, and where have you abode
 All the long night, clothed in your impudence?
 What have you done since you departed hence? 205

XXVII

'Apollo soon will pass within this gate
 And bind your tender body in a chain
 Inextricably tight, and fast as fate,
 Unless you can delude the God again,
 Even when within his arms—ah, runagate! 210
 A pretty torment both for Gods and Men
 Your father made when he made you!'—'Dear mother,'
 Replied sly Hermes, 'wherefore scold and bother?

XXVIII

'As if I were like other babes as old,
 And understood nothing of what is what;
 And cared at all to hear my mother scold. 215
 I in my subtle brain a scheme have got,

Which whilst the sacred stars round Heaven are rolled
 Will profit you and me—nor shall our lot
 Be as you counsel, without gifts or food,
 To spend our lives in this obscure abode.

220

XXIX

‘But we will leave this shadow-peopled cave
 And live among the Gods, and pass each day
 In high communion, sharing what they have
 Of profuse wealth and unexhausted prey;
 And from the portion which my father gave
 To Phoebus, I will snatch my share away,
 Which if my father will not—natheless I,
 Who am the king of robbers, can but try.

225

XXX

‘And, if Latona’s son should find me out,
 I’ll countermine him by a deeper plan;
 I’ll pierce the Pythian temple-walls, though stout,
 And sack the fane of everything I can—
 Caldrons and tripods of great worth no doubt,
 Each golden cup and polished brazen pan,
 All the wrought tapestries and garments gay.’—
 So they together talked;—meanwhile the Day

230

235

XXXI

Aethereal born arose out of the flood
 Of flowing Ocean, bearing light to men.
 Apollo passed toward the sacred wood,
 Which from the inmost depths of its green glen
 Echoes the voice of Neptune,—and there stood
 On the same spot in green Onchestus then
 That same old animal, the vine-dresser,
 Who was employed hedging his vineyard there.

240

245

XXXII

Latona’s glorious Son began:—‘I pray
 Tell, ancient hedger of Onchestus green,
 Whether a drove of kine has passed this way,
 All heifers with crooked horns? for they have been
 Stolen from the herd in high Pieria,
 Where a black bull was fed apart, between
 Two woody mountains in a neighbouring glen,
 And four fierce dogs watched there, unanimous as men.

250

XXXIII

‘And what is strange, the author of this theft
 Has stolen the fatted heifers every one,
 But the four dogs and the black bull are left:—
 Stolen they were last night at set of sun,

255

252 neighbouring] neighbour *Harvard MS.*

Of their soft beds and their sweet food bereft.—

Now tell me, man born ere the world begun,
Have you seen any one pass with the cows?'—
To whom the man of overhanging brows:

260

XXXIV

'My friend, it would require no common skill

Justly to speak of everything I see:

On various purposes of good or ill

Many pass by my vineyard,—and to me

'Tis difficult to know the invisible

265

Thoughts, which in all those many minds may be:—

Thus much alone I certainly can say,

I tilled these vines till the decline of day,

XXXV

'And then I thought I saw, but dare not speak

270

With certainty of such a wondrous thing,

A child, who could not have been born a week,

Those fair-horned cattle closely following,

And in his hand he held a polished stick:

And, as on purpose, he walked wavering

275

From one side to the other of the road,

And with his face opposed the steps he trod.'

XXXVI

Apollo hearing this, passed quickly on—

No wingèd omen could have shown more clear

That the deceiver was his father's son.

280

So the God wraps a purple atmosphere

Around his shoulders, and like fire is gone

To famous Pylos, seeking his kine there,

And found their track and his, yet hardly cold,

And cried—'What wonder do mine eyes behold!

285

XXXVII

'Here are the footsteps of the hornèd herd

Turned back towards their fields of asphodel;—

But *these* are not the tracks of beast or bird,

Gray wolf, or bear, or lion of the dell,

Or manèd Centaur—sand was never stirred

290

By man or woman thus! Inexplicable!

Who with unwearied feet could e'er impress

The sand with such enormous vestiges?

XXXVIII

'That was most strange—but this is stranger still!'

Thus having said, Phoebus impetuously

295

Sought high Cyllene's forest-cinctured hill,

And the deep cavern where dark shadows lie,

And where the ambrosial nymph with happy will
 Bore the Saturnian's love-child, Mercury—
 And a delightful odour from the dew
 Of the hill pastures, at his coming, flew.

300

XXXIX

And Phoebus stooped under the craggy roof
 Arched over the dark cavern:—Maia's child
 Perceived that he came angry, far aloof,
 About the cows of which he had been beguiled;
 And over him the fine and fragrant woof
 Of his ambrosial swaddling-clothes he piled—
 As among fire-brands lies a burning spark
 Covered, beneath the ashes cold and dark.

305

XL

There, like an infant who had sucked his fill
 And now was newly washed and put to bed,
 Awake, but courting sleep with weary will,
 And gathered in a lump, hands, feet, and head,
 He lay, and his beloved tortoise still
 He grasped and held under his shoulder-blade.
 Phoebus the lovely mountain-goddess knew,
 Not less her subtle, swindling baby, who

310

315

XLI

Lay swathed in his sly wiles. Round every crook
 Of the ample cavern, for his kine, Apollo
 Looked sharp; and when he saw them not, he took
 The glittering key, and opened three great hollow
 Recesses in the rock—where many a nook
 Was filled with the sweet food immortals swallow,
 And mighty heaps of silver and of gold
 Were piled within—a wonder to behold!

320

325

XLII

And white and silver robes, all overwrought
 With cunning workmanship of tracery sweet—
 Except among the Gods there can be nought
 In the wide world to be compared with it.
 Latona's offspring, after having sought
 His herds in every corner, thus did greet
 Great Hermes:—'Little cradled rogue, declare
 Of my illustrious heifers, where they are!

330

XLIII

'Speak quickly! or a quarrel between us
 Must rise, and the event will be, that I
 Shall hurl you into dismal Tartarus,

335

In fiery gloom to dwell eternally;
 Nor shall your father nor your mother loose
 The bars of that black dungeon—utterly
 You shall be cast out from the light of day,
 To rule the ghosts of men, unblessed as they.' 340

XLIV

To whom thus Hermes slyly answered:—'Son
 Of great Latona, what a speech is this!
 Why come you here to ask me what is done
 With the wild oxen which it seems you miss? 345
 I have not seen them, nor from any one
 Have heard a word of the whole business;
 If you should promise an immense reward,
 I could not tell more than you now have heard.

XLV

'An ox-stealer should be both tall and strong,
 And I am but a little new-born thing,
 Who, yet at least, can think of nothing wrong:—
 My business is to suck, and sleep, and fling
 The cradle-clothes about me all day long,—
 Or half asleep, hear my sweet mother sing, 355
 And to be washed in water clean and warm,
 And hushed and kissed and kept secure from harm.

XLVI

'O, let not e'er this quarrel be averred!
 The astounded Gods would laugh at you, if e'er
 You should allege a story so absurd 360
 As that a new-born infant forth could fare
 Out of his home after a savage herd.
 I was born yesterday—my small feet are
 Too tender for the roads so hard and rough:—
 And if you think that this is not enough, 365

XLVII

'I swear a great oath, by my father's head,
 That I stole not your cows, and that I know
 Of no one else, who might, or could, or did.—
 Whatever things cows are, I do not know,
 For I have only heard the name.'—This said, 370
 He winked as fast as could be, and his brow
 Was wrinkled, and a whistle loud gave he,
 Like one who hears some strange absurdity.

XLVIII

Apollo gently smiled and said:—'Ay, ay,—
 You cunning little rascal, you will bore 375
 Many a rich man's house, and your array
 Of thieves will lay their siege before his door,

Silent as night, in night; and many a day
 In the wild glens rough shepherds will deplore
 That you or yours, having an appetite,
 Met with their cattle, comrade of the night!

380

XLIX

'And this among the Gods shall be your gift,
 To be considered as the lord of those
 Who swindle, house-break, sheep-steal, and shop-lift;—
 But now if you would not your last sleep doze;
 Crawl out!'—Thus saying, Phoebus did uplift
 The subtle infant in his swaddling clothes,
 And in his arms, according to his wont,
 A scheme devised the illustrious Argiphont.

385

L

And sneezed and shuddered—Phoebus on the grass
 Him threw, and whilst all that he had designed
 He did perform—eager although to pass,
 Apollo darted from his mighty mind
 Towards the subtle babe the following scoff:—
 'Do not imagine this will get you off,

390

395

LI

'You little swaddled child of Jove and May!'
 And seized him:—'By this omen I shall trace
 My noble herds, and you shall lead the way.'—
 Cyllenian Hermes from the grassy place,
 Like one in earnest haste to get away,
 Rose, and with hands lifted towards his face
 Round both his ears up from his shoulders drew
 His swaddling clothes, and—'What mean you to do

400

LII

'With me, you unkind God?'—said Mercury:
 'Is it about these cows you tease me so?
 I wish the race of cows were perished!—I
 Stole not your cows—I do not even know
 What things cows are. Alas! I well may sigh
 That, since I came into this world of woe,
 I should have ever heard the name of one—
 But I appeal to the Saturnian's throne.'

405

410

LIII

Thus Phoebus and the vagrant Mercury
 Talked without coming to an explanation,
 With adverse purpose. As for Phoebus, he
 Sought not revenge, but only information,

415

And Hermes tried with lies and roguery
 To cheat Apollo.—But when no evasion
 Served—for the cunning one his match had found—
 He paced on first over the sandy ground.

LIV

He of the Silver Bow the child of Jove 420
 Followed behind, till to their heavenly Sire
 Came both his children, beautiful as Love,
 And from his equal balance did require
 A judgement in the cause wherein they strove.
 O'er odorous Olympus and its snows 425
 A murmuring tumult as they came arose,—

LV

And from the folded depths of the great Hill,
 While Hermes and Apollo reverent stood
 Before Jove's throne, the indestructible
 Immortals rushed in mighty multitude; 430
 And whilst their seats in order due they fill,
 The lofty Thunderer in a careless mood
 To Phoebus said:—'Whence drive you this sweet prey,
 This herald-baby, born but yesterday?—

LVI

'A most important subject, trifler, this 435
 To lay before the Gods!'—'Nay, Father, nay,
 When you have understood the business,
 Say not that I alone am fond of prey.
 I found this little boy in a recess
 Under Cyllene's mountains far away— 440
 A manifest and most apparent thief,
 A scandalmonger beyond all belief.

LVII

'I never saw his like either in Heaven
 Or upon earth for knavery or craft:—
 Out of the field my cattle yester-even, 445
 By the low shore on which the loud sea laughed,
 He right down to the river-ford had driven;
 And mere astonishment would make you daft
 To see the double kind of footsteps strange
 He has impressed wherever he did range. 450

LVIII

'The cattle's track on the black dust, full well
 Is evident, as if they went towards
 The place from which they came—that asphodel
 Meadow, in which I feed my many herds,—

His steps were most incomprehensible—

455

I know not how I can describe in words
Those tracks—he could have gone along the sands
Neither upon his feet nor on his hands;—

LIX

‘He must have had some other stranger mode

460

Of moving on: those vestiges immense,
Far as I traced them on the sandy road,
Seemed like the trail of oak-toppings:—but thence
No mark nor track denoting where they trod
The hard ground gave:—but, working at his fence,
A mortal hedger saw him as he passed
To Pylos, with the cows, in fiery haste.

465

LX

‘I found that in the dark he quietly

Had sacrificed some cows, and before light
Had thrown the ashes all dispersedly
About the road—then, still as gloomy night,
Had crept into his cradle, either eye
Rubbing, and cogitating some new sleight.
No eagle could have seen him as he lay
Hid in his cavern from the peering day.

470

LXI

‘I taxed him with the fact, when he averred

475

Most solemnly that he did neither see
Nor even had in any manner heard
Of my lost cows, whatever things cows be;
Nor could he tell, though offered a reward,
Not even who could tell of them to me.’
So speaking, Phoebus sate; and Hermes then
Addressed the Supreme Lord of Gods and Men:—

480

LXII

‘Great Father, you know clearly beforehand

That all which I shall say to you is sooth;
I am a most veracious person, and
Totally unacquainted with untruth.

485

At sunrise Phoebus came, but with no band
Of Gods to bear him witness, in great wrath,
To my abode, seeking his heifers there,
And saying that I must show him where they are,

490

LXIII

‘Or he would hurl me down the dark abyss.

I know that every Apollonian limb
Is clothed with speed and might and manliness,
As a green bank with flowers—but unlike him

488 wrath] *ruth Harvard MS.*

I was born yesterday, and you may guess
 He well knew this when he indulged the whim
 Of bullying a poor little new-born thing
 That slept, and never thought of cow-driving.

495

LXIV

'Am I like a strong fellow who steals kine?
 Believe me, dearest Father—such you are—
 This driving of the herds is none of mine;
 Across my threshold did I wander ne'er,
 So may I thrive! I reverence the divine
 Sun and the Gods, and I love you, and care
 Even for this hard accuser—who must know
 I am as innocent as they or you.

500

505

LXV

'I swear by these most gloriously-wrought portals
 (It is, you will allow, an oath of might)
 Through which the multitude of the Immortals
 Pass and repass forever, day and night,
 Devising schemes for the affairs of mortals—
 That I am guiltless; and I will requite,
 Although mine enemy be great and strong,
 His cruel threat—do thou defend the young!'

510

LXVI

So speaking, the Cyllenian Argiphont
 Winked, as if now his adversary was fitted:—
 And Jupiter, according to his wont,
 Laughed heartily to hear the subtle-witted
 Infant give such a plausible account,
 And every word a lie. But he remitted
 Judgement at present—and his exhortation
 Was, to compose the affair by arbitration.

515

520

LXVII

And they by mighty Jupiter were bidden
 To go forth with a single purpose both,
 Neither the other chiding nor yet chidden:
 And Mercury with innocence and truth
 To lead the way, and show where he had hidden
 The mighty heifers.—Hermes, nothing loth,
 Obeyed the Aegis-bearer's will—for he
 Is able to persuade all easily.

525

530

LXVIII

These lovely children of Heaven's highest Lord
 Hastened to Pylos and the pastures wide
 And lofty stalls by the Alphean ford,
 Where wealth in the mute night is multiplied

With silent growth. Whilst Hermes drove the herd

535

Out of the stony cavern, Phoebus spied
The hides of those the little babe had slain,
Stretched on the precipice above the plain.

LXIX

'How was it possible,' then Phoebus said,
'That you, a little child, born yesterday,
A thing on mother's milk and kisses fed,
Could two prodigious heifers ever flay?
Even I myself may well hereafter dread

540

Your prowess, offspring of Cyllenian May,
When you grow strong and tall.'—He spoke, and bound
Stiff withy bands the infant's wrists around.

545

LXX

He might as well have bound the oxen wild;

The withy bands, though starkly interknit,
Fell at the feet of the immortal child,

Loosened by some device of his quick wit.

550

Phoebus perceived himself again beguiled,

And stared—while Hermes sought some hole or pit,
Looking askance and winking fast as thought,
Where he might hide himself and not be caught.

LXXI

Sudden he changed his plan, and with strange skill

555

Subdued the strong Latonian, by the might

Of winning music, to his mightier will;

His left hand held the lyre, and in his right

The plectrum struck the chords—unconquerable

Up from beneath his hand in circling flight

560

The gathering music rose—and sweet as Love

The penetrating notes did live and move

LXXII

Within the heart of great Apollo—he

Listened with all his soul, and laughed for pleasure.

Close to his side stood harping fearlessly

565

The unabashed boy; and to the measure

Of the sweet lyre, there followed loud and free

His joyous voice; for he unlocked the treasure

Of his deep song, illustrating the birth

Of the bright Gods, and the dark desert Earth:

570

LXXIII

And how to the Immortals every one

A portion was assigned of all that is;

But chief Mnemosyne did Maia's son

Clothe in the light of his loud melodies;—

And, as each God was born or had begun,
 He in their order due and fit degrees
 Sung of his birth and being—and did move
 Apollo to unutterable love.

575

LXXIV

These words were wingèd with his swift delight:

‘You heifer-stealing schemer, well do you

580

Deserve that fifty oxen should requite

Such minstrelsies as I have heard even now.

Comrade of feasts, little contriving wight,

One of your secrets I would gladly know,

Whether the glorious power you now show forth

585

Was folded up within you at your birth,

LXXV

‘Or whether mortal taught or God inspired

The power of unpremeditated song?

Many divinest sounds have I admired,

The Olympian Gods and mortal men among;

590

But such a strain of wondrous, strange, untired,

And soul-awakening music, sweet and strong,

Yet did I never hear except from thee,

Offspring of May, impostor Mercury!

LXXVI

‘What Muse, what skill, what unimagined use,

595

What exercise of subtlest art, has given

Thy songs such power?—for those who hear may choose

From three, the choicest of the gifts of Heaven,

Delight, and love, and sleep,—sweet sleep, whose dews

Are sweeter than the balmy tears of even:—

600

And I, who speak this praise, am that Apollo

Whom the Olympian Muses ever follow:

LXXVII

‘And their delight is dance, and the blithe noise

Of song and overflowing poesy;

And sweet, even as desire, the liquid voice

605

Of pipes, that fills the clear air thrillingly;

But never did my inmost soul rejoice

In this dear work of youthful revelry

As now. I wonder at thee, son of Jove;

Thy harpings and thy song are soft as love.

610

LXXVIII

‘Now since thou hast, although so very small,

Science of arts so glorious, thus I swear,—

And let this cornel javelin, keen and tall,

Witness between us what I promise here,—

580 heifer-stealing] heifer-killing *Harvard MS.*

That I will lead thee to the Olympian Hall,
 Honoured and mighty, with thy mother dear,
 And many glorious gifts in joy will give thee,
 And even at the end will ne'er deceive thee.'

615

LXXIX

To whom thus Mercury with prudent speech:—
 'Wisely hast thou inquired of my skill:
 I envy thee no thing I know to teach
 Even this day:—for both in word and will
 I would be gentle with thee; thou canst reach
 All things in thy wise spirit, and thy sill
 Is highest in Heaven among the sons of Jove,
 Who loves thee in the fulness of his love.

620

625

LXXX

'The Counsellor Supreme has given to thee
 Divinest gifts, out of the amplitude
 Of his profuse exhaustless treasury;
 By thee, 'tis said, the depths are understood
 Of his far voice; by thee the mystery
 Of all oracular fates,—and the dread mood
 Of the diviner is breathed up; even I—
 A child—perceive thy might and majesty.

630

LXXXI

'Thou canst seek out and compass all that wit
 Can find or teach;—yet since thou wilt, come take
 The lyre—be mine the glory giving it—
 Strike the sweet chords, and sing aloud, and wake
 Thy joyous pleasure out of many a fit
 Of tranced sound—and with fleet fingers make
 Thy liquid-voicèd comrade talk with thee,—
 It can talk measured music eloquently.

635

640

LXXXII

'Then bear it boldly to the revel loud,
 Love-wakening dance, or feast of solemn state,
 A joy by night or day—for those endowed
 With art and wisdom who interrogate
 It teaches, babbling in delightful mood
 All things which make the spirit most elate,
 Soothing the mind with sweet familiar play,
 Chasing the heavy shadows of dismay.

645

650

LXXXIII

'To those who are unskilled in its sweet tongue,
 Though they should question most impetuously
 Its hidden soul, it gossips something wrong—
 Some senseless and impertinent reply.

But thou who art as wise as thou art strong

655

Canst compass all that thou desirest. I

Present thee with this music-flowing shell,

Knowing thou canst interrogate it well.

LXXXIV

'And let us two henceforth together feed,

On this green mountain-slope and pastoral plain,

660

The herds in litigation—they will breed

Quickly enough to recompense our pain,

If to the bulls and cows we take good heed;—

And thou, though somewhat over fond of gain,

Grudge me not half the profit.'—Having spoke,

665

The shell he proffered, and Apollo took;

LXXXV

And gave him in return the glittering lash,

Installing him as herdsman;—from the look

Of Mercury then laughed a joyous flash.

And then Apollo with the plectrum strook

670

The chords, and from beneath his hands a crash

Of mighty sounds rushed up, whose music shook

The soul with sweetness, and like an adept

His sweeter voice a just accordance kept.

LXXXVI

The herd went wandering o'er the divine mead,

675

Whilst these most beautiful Sons of Jupiter

Won their swift way up to the snowy head

Of white Olympus, with the joyous lyre

Soothing their journey; and their father dread

Gathered them both into familiar

680

Affection sweet,—and then, and now, and ever,

Hermes must love Him of the Golden Quiver,

LXXXVII

To whom he gave the lyre that sweetly sounded,

Which skilfully he held and played thereon.

He piped the while, and far and wide rebounded

685

The echo of his pipings; every one

Of the Olympians sat with joy astounded;

While he conceived another piece of fun,

One of his old tricks—which the God of Day

Perceiving, said:—'I fear thee, Son of May;—

690

LXXXVIII

'I fear thee and thy sly chameleon spirit,

Lest thou should steal my lyre and crookèd bow;

This glory and power thou dost from Jove inherit,

To teach all craft upon the earth below;

673 and like 1839, 1st ed.; as of ed. 1824, Harvard MS.

Thieves love and worship thee—it is thy merit
 To make all mortal business ebb and flow
 By roguery:—now, Hermes, if you dare
 By sacred Styx a mighty oath to swear

695

LXXXIX

‘That you will never rob me, you will do
 A thing extremely pleasing to my heart.’
 Then Mercury sware by the Stygian dew,
 That he would never steal his bow or dart,
 Or lay his hands on what to him was due,
 Or ever would employ his powerful art
 Against his Pythian fane. Then Phoebus swore
 There was no God or Man whom he loved more.

700

705

XC

‘And I will give thee as a good-will token,
 The beautiful wand of wealth and happiness;
 A perfect three-leaved rod of gold unbroken,
 Whose magic will thy footsteps ever bless;
 And whatsoever by Jove’s voice is spoken
 Of earthly or divine from its recess,
 It, like a loving soul, to thee will speak,
 And more than this, do thou forbear to seek.

710

XCI

‘For, dearest child, the divinations high
 Which thou requirest, ’tis unlawful ever
 That thou, or any other deity
 Should understand—and vain were the endeavour;
 For they are hidden in Jove’s mind, and I,
 In trust of them, have sworn that I would never
 Betray the counsels of Jove’s inmost will
 To any God—the oath was terrible.

715

720

XCII

‘Then, golden-wanded brother, ask me not
 To speak the fates by Jupiter designed;
 But be it mine to tell their various lot
 To the unnumbered tribes of human-kind.
 Let good to these, and ill to those be wrought
 As I dispense—but he who comes consigned
 By voice and wings of perfect augury
 To my great shrine, shall find avail in me.

725

730

XCIII

‘Him will I not deceive, but will assist;
 But he who comes relying on such birds
 As chatter vainly, who would strain and twist

713 loving] living *cj. Rossetti.*

The purpose of the Gods with idle words,
 And deems their knowledge light, he shall have missed
 His road—whilst I among my other hoards
 His gifts deposit. Yet, O son of May,
 I have another wondrous thing to say.

735

XCIV

'There are three Fates, three virgin Sisters, who
 Rejoicing in their wind-outspeeding wings,
 Their heads with flour snowed over white and new,
 Sit in a vale round which Parnassus flings
 Its circling skirts—from these I have learned true
 Vaticinations of remotest things.
 My father cared not. Whilst they search out dooms,
 They sit apart and feed on honeycombs.

740

745

XCV

'They, having eaten the fresh honey, grow
 Drunk with divine enthusiasm, and utter
 With earnest willingness the truth they know;
 But if deprived of that sweet food, they mutter
 All plausible delusions;—these to you
 I give;—if you inquire, they will not stutter;
 Delight your own soul with them:—any man
 You would instruct may profit if he can.

750

XCVI

'Take these and the fierce oxen, Maia's child—
 O'er many a horse and toil-enduring mule,
 O'er jagged-jawed lions, and the wild
 White-tusked boars, o'er all, by field or pool,
 Of cattle which the mighty Mother mild
 Nourishes in her bosom, thou shalt rule—
 Thou dost alone the veil from death uplift—
 Thou givest not—yet this is a great gift.'

755

760

XCVII

Thus King Apollo loved the child of May
 In truth, and Jove covered their love with joy.
 Hermes with Gods and Men even from that day
 Mingled, and wrought the latter much annoy,
 And little profit, going far astray
 Through the dun night. Farewell, delightful Boy,
 Of Jove and Maia sprung,—never by me,
 Nor thou, nor other songs, shall unremembered be.

765

770

761 from *Harvard MS.*; of *edd.* 1824, 1839.
 with love and joy, *edd.* 1824, 1839.

764 their love with joy *Harvard MS.*; them
 767 going] wandering *Harvard MS.*

HOMER'S HYMN TO CASTOR AND POLLUX

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.; dated 1818.]

YE wild-eyed Muses, sing the Twins of Jove,
 Whom the fair-ankled Leda, mixed in love
 With mighty Saturn's Heaven-obscurer Child,
 On Taygetus, that lofty mountain wild,
 Brought forth in joy: mild Pollux, void of blame, 5
 And steed-subduing Castor, heirs of fame.
 These are the Powers who earth-born mortals save
 And ships, whose flight is swift along the wave.
 When wintry tempests o'er the savage sea
 Are raging, and the sailors tremblingly 10
 Call on the Twins of Jove with prayer and vow,
 Gathered in fear upon the lofty prow,
 And sacrifice with snow-white lambs,—the wind
 And the huge billow bursting close behind,
 Even then beneath the weltering waters bear 15
 The staggering ship—they suddenly appear,
 On yellow wings rushing athwart the sky,
 And lull the blasts in mute tranquillity,
 And strew the waves on the white Ocean's bed,
 Fair omen of the voyage; from toil and dread 20
 The sailors rest, rejoicing in the sight,
 And plough the quiet sea in safe delight.

HOMER'S HYMN TO THE MOON

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.; dated 1818.]

DAUGHTERS of Jove, whose voice is melody,
 Muses, who know and rule all minstrelsy,
 Sing the wide-winged Moon! Around the earth,
 From her immortal head in Heaven shot forth,
 Far light is scattered—boundless glory springs; 5
 Where'er she spreads her many-beaming wings
 The lampless air glows round her golden crown.

But when the Moon divine from Heaven is gone
 Under the sea, her beams within abide,
 Till, bathing her bright limbs in Ocean's tide,
 Clothing her form in garments glittering far, 10
 And having yoked to her immortal car
 The beam-invested steeds whose necks on high
 Curve back, she drives to a remoter sky
 A western Crescent, borne impetuously, 15
 Then is made full the circle of her light,
 And as she grows, her beams more bright and bright
 Are poured from Heaven, where she is hovering then,
 A wonder and a sign to mortal men,

6 steed-subduing *emend. Rossetti*; steel-subduing 1839, 2nd ed.

The Son of Saturn with this glorious Power
Mingled in love and sleep—to whom she bore
Pandeia, a bright maid of beauty rare
Among the Gods, whose lives eternal are.

20

Hail Queen, great Moon, white-armed Divinity,
Fair-haired and favourable! thus with thee
My song beginning, by its music sweet
Shall make immortal many a glorious feat
Of demigods, with lovely lips, so well
Which minstrels, servants of the Muses, tell.

25

HOMER'S HYMN TO THE SUN

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.; dated 1818.]

OFFSPRING of Jove, Calliope, once more
To the bright Sun, thy hymn of music pour;
Whom to the child of star-clad Heaven and Earth
Euryphaëssa, large-eyed nymph, brought forth;
Euryphaëssa, the famed sister fair
Of great Hyperion, who to him did bear
A race of loveliest children; the young Morn,
Whose arms are like twin roses newly born,
The fair-haired Moon, and the immortal Sun,
Who borne by heavenly steeds his race doth run
Unconquerably, illuming the abodes
Of mortal Men and the eternal Gods.

5

10

Fiercely look forth his awe-inspiring eyes,
Beneath his golden helmet, whence arise
And are shot forth afar, clear beams of light;
His countenance, with radiant glory bright,
Beneath his graceful locks far shines around,
And the light vest with which his limbs are bound,
Of woof aethereal delicately twined,
Glow in the stream of the uplifting wind.
His rapid steeds soon bear him to the West;
Where their steep flight his hands divine arrest,
And the fleet car with yoke of gold, which he
Sends from bright Heaven beneath the shadowy sea.

15

20

HOMER'S HYMN TO THE EARTH: MOTHER OF ALL

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.; dated 1818.]

O UNIVERSAL Mother, who dost keep
From everlasting thy foundations deep,
Eldest of things, Great Earth, I sing of thee!
All shapes that have their dwelling in the sea,

All things that fly, or on the ground divine
Live, move, and there are nourished—these are thine;
These from thy wealth thou dost sustain; from thee
Fair babes are born, and fruits on every tree
Hang ripe and large, revered Divinity!

The life of mortal men beneath thy sway
Is held; thy power both gives and takes away!
Happy are they whom thy mild favours nourish;
All things unstinted round them grow and flourish.
For them, endures the life-sustaining field
Its load of harvest, and their cattle yield
Large increase, and their house with wealth is filled.
Such honoured dwell in cities fair and free,
The homes of lovely women, prosperously;
Their sons exult in youth's new budding gladness,
And their fresh daughters free from care or sadness,
With bloom-inwoven dance and happy song,
On the soft flowers the meadow-grass among,
Leap round them sporting—such delights by thee
Are given, rich Power, revered Divinity.

Mother of gods, thou Wife of starry Heaven,
Farewell! be thou propitious, and be given
A happy life for this brief melody,
Nor thou nor other songs shall unremembered be.

HOMER'S HYMN TO MINERVA

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed.; dated 1818.]

I SING the glorious Power with azure eyes,
Athenian Pallas! tameless, chaste, and wise,
Tritogenia, town-preserving Maid,
Revered and mighty; from his awful head
Whom Jove brought forth, in warlike armour dressed,
Golden, all radiant! wonder strange possessed
The everlasting Gods that Shape to see,
Shaking a javelin keen, impetuously
Rush from the crest of Aegis-bearing Jove;
Fearfully Heaven was shaken, and did move
Beneath the might of the Cerulean-eyed;
Earth dreadfully resounded, far and wide;
And, lifted from its depths, the sea swelled high
In purple billows, the tide suddenly
Stood still, and great Hyperion's son long time
Checked his swift steeds, till, where she stood sublime,
Pallas from her immortal shoulders threw
The arms divine; wise Jove rejoiced to view,
Child of the Aegis-bearer, hail to thee,
Nor thine nor others' praise shall unremembered be.

HOMER'S HYMN TO VENUS

[Published by Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862; dated 1818.]

[Vv. 1-55, with some omissions.]

MUSE, sing the deeds of golden Aphrodite,
 Who wakens with her smile the lulled delight
 Of sweet desire, taming the eternal kings
 Of Heaven, and men, and all the living things
 That fleet along the air, or whom the sea, 5
 Or earth, with her maternal ministry,
 Nourish innumerable, thy delight
 All seek O crownèd Aphrodite!
 Three spirits canst thou not deceive or quell:—
 Minerva, child of Jove, who loves too well 10
 Fierce war and mingling combat, and the fame
 Of glorious deeds, to heed thy gentle flame.
 Diana golden-shafted queen,
 Is tamed not by thy smiles; the shadows green
 Of the wild woods, the bow, the . . . 15
 And piercing cries amid the swift pursuit
 Of beasts among waste mountains,—such delight
 Is hers, and men who know and do the right.
 Nor Saturn's first-born daughter, Vesta chaste,
 Whom Neptune and Apollo wooed the last, 20
 Such was the will of aegis-bearing Jove;
 But sternly she refused the ills of Love,
 And by her mighty Father's head she swore
 An oath not unperformed, that evermore
 A virgin she would live mid deities 25
 Divine: her father, for such gentle ties
 Renounced, gave glorious gifts—thus in his hall
 She sits and feeds luxuriously. O'er all
 In every fane, her honours first arise
 From men—the eldest of Divinities. 30
 These spirits she persuades not, nor deceives,
 But none beside escape, so well she weaves
 Her unseen toils; nor mortal men, nor gods
 Who live secure in their unseen abodes.
 She won the soul of him whose fierce delight 35
 Is thunder—first in glory and in might.
 And, as she willed, his mighty mind deceiving,
 With mortal limbs his deathless limbs inweaving,
 Concealed him from his spouse and sister fair,
 Whom to wise Saturn ancient Rhea bare. 40
 but in return,
 In Venus Jove did soft desire awaken,
 That by her own enchantments overtaken,
 She might, no more from human union free,
 Burn for a nursling of mortality. 45
 For once, amid the assembled Deities,

The laughter-loving Venus from her eyes
 Shot forth the light of a soft starlight smile,
 And boasting said, that she, secure the while,
 Could bring at will to the assembled Gods
 The mortal tenants of earth's dark abodes,
 And mortal offspring from a deathless stem
 She could produce in scorn and spite of them.
 Therefore he poured desire into her breast
 Of young Anchises,
 Feeding his herds among the mossy fountains
 Of the wide Ida's many-folded mountains,—
 Whom Venus saw, and loved, and the love clung
 Like wasting fire her senses wild among.

50

55

THE CYCLOPS

A SATYRIC DRAMA

TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK OF EURIPIDES

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824; dated 1819. Amongst the Shelley MSS. at the Bodleian there is a copy, 'practically complete,' which has been collated by Mr. C. D. Locock. See *Examination*, &c., 1903, pp. 64-70. 'Though legible throughout, and comparatively free from corrections, it has the appearance of being a first draft' (Locock).]

SILENUS.

CHORUS OF SATYRS.

| ULYSSES.

| THE CYCLOPS.

Silenus. O Bacchus, what a world of toil, both now
 And ere these limbs were overworn with age,
 Have I endured for thee! First, when thou fled'st
 The mountain-nymphs who nursed thee, driven afar
 By the strange madness Juno sent upon thee;
 Then in the battle of the sons of Earth,
 When I stood foot by foot close to thy side,
 No unpropitious fellow-combatant,
 And, driving through his shield my wingèd spear,
 Slew vast Enceladus. Consider now,
 Is it a dream of which I speak to thee?
 By Jove, it is not, for you have the trophies!
 And now I suffer more than all before.
 For when I heard that Juno had devised
 A tedious voyage for you, I put to sea
 With all my children quaint in search of you,
 And I myself stood on the beakèd prow
 And fixed the naked mast; and all my boys
 Leaning upon their oars, with splash and strain
 Made white with foam the green and purple sea,—
 And so we sought you, king. We were sailing
 Near Malea, when an eastern wind arose,
 And drove us to this waste Aetnean rock;

5

10

15

20

23 waste *B.*; wild 1824; 'cf. 26, where waste is cancelled for wild' (Locock).

The one-eyed children of the Ocean God,
 The man-destroying Cyclopes, inhabit, 25
 On this wild shore, their solitary caves,
 And one of these, named Polypheme, has caught us
 To be his slaves ; and so, for all delight
 Of Bacchic sports, sweet dance and melody,
 We keep this lawless giant's wandering flocks. 30
 My sons indeed, on far declivities,
 Young things themselves, tend on the youngling sheep,
 But I remain to fill the water-casks,
 Or sweeping the hard floor, or ministering
 Some impious and abominable meal 35
 To the fell Cyclops. I am wearied of it !
 And now I must scrape up the littered floor
 With this great iron rake, so to receive
 My absent master and his evening sheep
 In a cave neat and clean. Even now I see 40
 My children tending the flocks hitherward.
 Ha ! what is this ? are your Sicinnian measures
 Even now the same, as when with dance and song
 You brought young Bacchus to Althaea's halls ?

Chorus of Satyrs.

STROPHE

Where has he of race divine 45
 Wandered in the winding rocks ?
 Here the air is calm and fine
 For the father of the flocks ;—
 Here the grass is soft and sweet,
 And the river-eddies meet 50
 In the trough beside the cave,
 Bright as in their fountain wave.—
 Neither here, nor on the dew
 Of the lawny uplands feeding ?
 Oh, you come !—a stone at you 55
 Will I throw to mend your breeding ;—
 Get along, you hornèd thing,
 Wild, seditious, rambling !

EPODE

An Iacchic melody
 To the golden Aphrodite 60
 Will I lift, as erst did I
 Seeking her and her delight
 With the Maenads, whose white feet
 To the music glance and fleet.
 Bacchus, O belovèd, where, 65
 Shaking wide thy yellow hair,
 Wanderest thou alone, afar ?
 To the one-eyed Cyclops, we,

Who by right thy servants are,
Minister in misery,
In these wretched goat-skins clad,
Far from thy delights and thee.

70

Silenus. Be silent, sons; command the slaves to drive
The gathered flocks into the rock-roofed cave.

Chorus. Go! But what needs this serious haste, O father?

75

Silenus. I see a Grecian vessel on the coast,
And thence the rowers with some general
Approaching to this cave.—About their necks
Hang empty vessels, as they wanted food,
And water-flasks.—Oh, miserable strangers!
Whence come they, that they know not what and who
My master is, approaching in ill hour
The inhospitable roof of Polypheme,
And the Cyclopan jaw-bone, man-destroying?
Be silent, Satyrs, while I ask and hear
Whence coming, they arrive the Aetnean hill.

80

85

Ulysses. Friends, can you show me some clear water-spring,
The remedy of our thirst? Will any one
Furnish with food seamen in want of it?
Ha! what is this? We seem to be arrived
At the blithe court of Bacchus. I observe
This sportive band of Satyrs near the caves.
First let me greet the elder.—Hail!

90

Silenus. Hail thou,
O Stranger! tell thy country and thy race.

Ulysses. The Ithacan Ulysses and the king
Of Cephalonia.

95

Silenus. Oh! I know the man,
Wordy and shrewd, the son of Sisyphus.

Ulysses. I am the same, but do not rail upon me.—

Silenus. Whence sailing do you come to Sicily?

Ulysses. From Ilion, and from the Trojan toils.

100

Silenus. How, touched you not at your paternal shore?

Ulysses. The strength of tempests bore me here by force.

Silenus. The self-same accident occurred to me.

Ulysses. Were you then driven here by stress of weather?

Silenus. Following the Pirates who had kidnapped Bacchus.

105

Ulysses. What land is this, and who inhabit it?—

Silenus. Aetna, the loftiest peak in Sicily.

Ulysses. And are there walls, and tower-surrounded towns?

Silenus. There are not.—These lone rocks are bare of men.

Ulysses. And who possess the land? the race of beasts?

110

Silenus. Cyclops, who live in caverns, not in houses.

Ulysses. Obeying whom? Or is the state popular?

Silenus. Shepherds: no one obeys any in aught.

Ulysses. How live they? do they sow the corn of Ceres?

Silenus. On milk and cheese, and on the flesh of sheep.

115

Ulysses. Have they the Bromian drink from the vine's stream?

Silenus. Ah! no; they live in an ungracious land.

Ulysses. And are they just to strangers?—hospitable?

Silenus. They think the sweetest thing a stranger brings
Is his own flesh.

Ulysses. What! do they eat man's flesh?

120

Silenus. No one comes here who is not eaten up.

Ulysses. The Cyclops now—where is he? Not at home?

Silenus. Absent on Aetna, hunting with his dogs.

Ulysses. Know'st thou what thou must do to aid us hence?

Silenus. I know not: we will help you all we can.

125

Ulysses. Provide us food, of which we are in want.

Silenus. Here is not anything, as I said, but meat.

Ulysses. But meat is a sweet remedy for hunger.

Silenus. Cow's milk there is, and store of curdled cheese.

Ulysses. Bring 'out:—I would see all before I bargain.

130

Silenus. But how much gold will you engage to give?

Ulysses. I bring no gold, but Bacchic juice.

Silenus. Oh, joy!

'Tis long since these dry lips were wet with wine.

Ulysses. Maron, the son of the God, gave it me.

Silenus. Whom I have nursed a baby in my arms.

135

Ulysses. The son of Bacchus, for your clearer knowledge.

Silenus. Have you it now?—or is it in the ship?

Ulysses. Old man, this skin contains it, which you see.

Silenus. Why, this would hardly be a mouthful for me.

Ulysses. Nay, twice as much as you can draw from thence.

140

Silenus. You speak of a fair fountain, sweet to me.

Ulysses. Would you first taste of the unmingled wine?

Silenus. 'Tis just—tasting invites the purchaser.

Ulysses. Here is the cup, together with the skin.

Silenus. Pour: that the draught may fillip my remembrance.

145

Ulysses. See!

Silenus. Papaïapax! what a sweet smell it has!

Ulysses. You see it then?—

Silenus. By Jove, no! but I smell it.

Ulysses. Taste, that you may not praise it in words only.

Silenus. Babai! Great Bacchus calls me forth to dance!

Joy! joy!

Ulysses. Did it flow sweetly down your throat?

150

Silenus. So that it tingled to my very nails.

Ulysses. And in addition I will give you gold.

Silenus. Let gold alone! only unlock the cask.

Ulysses. Bring out some cheeses now, or a young goat.

Silenus. That will I do, despising any master.

155

Yes, let me drink one cup, and I will give

All that the Cyclops feed upon their mountains.

Chorus. Ye have taken Troy and laid your hands on Helen?

Ulysses. And utterly destroyed the race of Priam.

Silenus. The wanton wretch! she was bewitched to see
 The many-coloured anklets and the chain
 Of woven gold which girt the neck of Paris,
 And so she left that good man Menelaus.
 There should be no more women in the world
 But such as are reserved for me alone.—
 See, here are sheep, and here are goats, Ulysses,
 Here are unsparing cheeses of pressed milk;
 Take them; depart with what good speed ye may;
 First leaving my reward, the Bacchic dew
 Of joy-inspiring grapes.

Ulysses. Ah me! Alas!
 What shall we do? the Cyclops is at hand!
 Old man, we perish! whither can we fly?

Silenus. Hide yourselves quick within that hollow rock.

Ulysses. 'Twere perilous to fly into the net.

Silenus. The cavern has recesses numberless;
 Hide yourselves quick.

Ulysses. That will I never do!
 The mighty Troy would be indeed disgraced
 If I should fly one man. How many times
 Have I withstood, with shield immovable,
 Ten thousand Phrygians!—if I needs must die,
 Yet will I die with glory;—if I live,
 The praise which I have gained will yet remain.

Silenus. What, ho! assistance, comrades, haste, assistance!

The CYCLOPS, SILENUS, ULYSSES; CHORUS.

Cyclops. What is this tumult? Bacchus is not here,
 Nor tympanies nor brazen castanets.
 How are my young lambs in the cavern? Milking
 Their dams or playing by their sides? And is
 The new cheese pressed into the bulrush baskets?
 Speak! I'll beat some of you till you rain tears—
 Look up, not downwards when I speak to you.

Silenus. See! I now gape at Jupiter himself;
 I stare upon Orion and the stars.

Cyclops. Well, is the dinner fitly cooked and laid?

Silenus. All ready, if your throat is ready too.

Cyclops. Are the bowls full of milk besides?

Silenus. O'er-brimming;
 So you may drink a tunful if you will.

Cyclops. Is it ewe's milk or cow's milk, or both mixed?—

Silenus. Both, either; only pray don't swallow me.

Cyclops. By no means.—

What is this crowd I see beside the stalls?
 Outlaws or thieves? for near my cavern-home
 I see my young lambs coupled two by two
 With willow bands; mixed with my cheeses lie

Their implements ; and this old fellow here
Has his bald head broken with stripes.

Silenus. Ah me!

205

I have been beaten till I burn with fever.

Cyclops. By whom? Who laid his fist upon your head?

Silenus. Those men, because I would not suffer them
To steal your goods.

Cyclops. Did not the rascals know

I am a God, sprung from the race of Heaven?

210

Silenus. I told them so, but they bore off your things,

And ate the cheese in spite of all I said,

And carried out the lambs—and said, moreover,

They'd pin you down with a three-cubit collar,

And pull your vitals out through your one eye,

215

Furrow your back with stripes, then, binding you,

Throw you as ballast into the ship's hold,

And then deliver you, a slave, to move

Enormous rocks, or found a vestibule.

Cyclops. In truth? Nay, haste, and place in order quickly

220

The cooking-knives, and heap upon the hearth,

And kindle it, a great faggot of wood.—

As soon as they are slaughtered, they shall fill

My belly, broiling warm from the live coals,

Or boiled and seethed within the bubbling caldron.

225

I am quite sick of the wild mountain game;

Of stags and lions I have gorged enough,

And I grow hungry for the flesh of men.

Silenus. Nay, master, something new is very pleasant

After one thing forever, and of late

230

Very few strangers have approached our cave.

Ulysses. Hear, Cyclops, a plain tale on the other side.

We, wanting to buy food, came from our ship

Into the neighbourhood of your cave, and here

This old Silenus gave us in exchange

235

These lambs for wine, the which he took and drank,

And all by mutual compact, without force.

There is no word of truth in what he says,

For slyly he was selling all your store.

Silenus. I? May you perish, wretch—

Ulysses. If I speak false!

240

Silenus. Cyclops, I swear by Neptune who begot thee,

By mighty Triton and by Nereus old,

Calypso and the glaucous Ocean Nymphs,

The sacred waves and all the race of fishes—

Be these the witnesses, my dear sweet master,

245

My darling little Cyclops, that I never

Gave any of your stores to these false strangers;—

If I speak false may those whom most I love,

My children, perish wretchedly!

Chorus.

There stop!

I saw him giving these things to the strangers.
If I speak false, then may my father perish,
But do not thou wrong hospitality.

250

Cyclops. You lie! I swear that he is juster far
Than Rhadamanthus—I trust more in him.
But let me ask, whence have ye sailed, O strangers?
Who are you? And what city nourished ye?

255

Ulysses. Our race is Ithacan—having destroyed
The town of Troy, the tempests of the sea
Have driven us on thy land, O Polypheme.

Cyclops. What, have ye shared in the unenvied spoil
Of the false Helen, near Scamander's stream?

260

Ulysses. The same, having endured a woful toil.

Cyclops. Oh, basest expedition! sailed ye not
From Greece to Phrygia for one woman's sake?

Ulysses. 'Twas the Gods' work—no mortal was in fault.

265

But, O great Offspring of the Ocean-King,
We pray thee and admonish thee with freedom,
That thou dost spare thy friends who visit thee,
And place no impious food within thy jaws.

For in the depths of Greece we have upreared
Temples to thy great Father, which are all
His homes. The sacred bay of Taenarus

270

Remains inviolate, and each dim recess
Scooped high on the Malean promontory,
And æry Sunium's silver-veinèd crag,
Which divine Pallas keeps unprofaned ever,

275

The Gerastian asylums, and whate'er
Within wide Greece our enterprise has kept
From Phrygian contumely; and in which
You have a common care, for you inhabit
The skirts of Grecian land, under the roots
Of Aetna and its crags, spotted with fire.

280

Turn then to converse under human laws,
Receive us shipwrecked suppliants, and provide
Food, clothes, and fire, and hospitable gifts;

285

Nor fixing upon oxen-piercing spits
Our limbs, so fill your belly and your jaws.

Priam's wide land has widowed Greece enough;
And weapon-wingèd murder heaped together
Enough of dead, and wives are husbandless,

290

And ancient women and gray fathers wail
Their childless age;—if you should roast the rest—
And 'tis a bitter feast that you prepare—

Where then would any turn? Yet be persuaded;
Forgo the lust of your jaw-bone; prefer

295

Pious humanity to wicked will:

Many have bought too dear their evil joys.

Silenus. Let me advise you, do not spare a morsel

Of all his flesh. If you should eat his tongue
You would become most eloquent, O Cyclops.

300

Cyclops. Wealth, my good fellow, is the wise man's God,
All other things are a pretence and boast.
What are my father's ocean promontories,
The sacred rocks whereon he dwells, to me?
Stranger, I laugh to scorn Jove's thunderbolt,
I know not that his strength is more than mine.
As to the rest I care not.—When he pours
Rain from above, I have a close pavilion
Under this rock, in which I lie supine,
Feasting on a roast calf or some wild beast,
And drinking pans of milk, and gloriously
Emulating the thunder of high Heaven.
And when the Thracian wind pours down the snow,
I wrap my body in the skins of beasts,
Kindle a fire, and bid the snow whirl on.
The earth, by force, whether it will or no,
Bringing forth grass, fattens my flocks and herds,
Which, to what other God but to myself
And this great belly, first of deities,
Should I be bound to sacrifice? I well know
The wise man's only Jupiter is this,
To eat and drink during his little day,
And give himself no care. And as for those
Who complicate with laws the life of man,
I freely give them tears for their reward.
I will not cheat my soul of its delight,
Or hesitate in dining upon you:—
And that I may be quit of all demands,
These are my hospitable gifts;—fiere fire
And yon ancestral caldron, which o'er-bubbling
Shall finely cook your miserable flesh.
Creep in!—

305

310

315

320

325

330

Ulysses. Ai! ai! I have escaped the Trojan toils,
I have escaped the sea, and now I fall
Under the cruel grasp of one impious man.
O Pallas, Mistress, Goddess, sprung from Jove,
Now, now, assist me! Mightier toils than Troy
Are these;—I totter on the chasms of peril;—
And thou who inhabitest the thrones
Of the bright stars, look, hospitable Jove,
Upon this outrage of thy deity,
Otherwise be considered as no God!

335

340

Chorus (alone).

For your gaping gulf and your gullet wide,
The ravin is ready on every side,

344 ravin Rossetti; spelt ravine in B., edd. 1824, 1839.

- The limbs of the strangers are cooked and done; 345
 There is boiled meat, and roast meat, and meat from the coal,
 You may chop it, and tear it, and gnash it for fun,
 An hairy goat's-skin contains the whole.
 Let me but escape, and ferry me o'er
 The stream of your wrath to a safer shore. 350
 The Cyclops Aetnean is cruel and bold,
 He murders the strangers
 That sit on his hearth,
 And dreads no avengers
 To rise from the earth. 355
 He roasts the men before they are cold,
 He snatches them broiling from the coal,
 And from the caldron pulls them whole,
 And minces their flesh and gnaws their bone
 With his cursèd teeth, till all be gone. 360
 Farewell, foul pavilion:
 Farewell, rites of dread!
 The Cyclops vermilion,
 With slaughter uncloying,
 Now feasts on the dead, 365
 In the flesh of strangers joying!
- Ulysses.* O Jupiter! I saw within the cave
 Horrible things; deeds to be feigned in words,
 But not to be believed as being done.
- Chorus.* What! sawest thou the impious Polypheme
 Feasting upon your loved companions now? 370
- Ulysses.* Selecting two, the plumpest of the crowd,
 He grasped them in his hands.—
- Chorus.* Unhappy man!
- Ulysses.* Soon as we came into this craggy place,
 Kindling a fire, he cast on the broad hearth 375
 The knotty limbs of an enormous oak,
 Three waggon-loads at least, and then he strewed
 Upon the ground, beside the red firelight,
 His couch of pine-leaves; and he milked the cows,
 And pouring forth the white milk, filled a bowl 380
 Three cubits wide and four in depth, as much
 As would contain ten amphorae, and bound it
 With ivy wreaths; then placed upon the fire
 A brazen pot to boil, and made red hot
 The points of spits, not sharpened with the sickle, 385
 But with a fruit tree bough, and with the jaws
 Of axes for Aetnean slaughterings¹.
 And when this God-abandoned Cook of Hell
 Had made all ready, he seized two of us

369 not to be believed *B.*; not believed 1824.
 cancelled for ten (possibly) *B.*

382 ten *cj.* Swinburne; four 1824; four

¹ I confess I do not understand this.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

And killed them in a kind of measured manner ; 390
 For he flung one against the brazen rivets
 Of the huge caldron, and seized the other
 By the foot's tendon, and knocked out his brains
 Upon the sharp edge of the craggy stone:
 Then peeled his flesh with a great cooking-knife 395
 And put him down to roast. The other's limbs
 He chopped into the caldron to be boiled.
 And I, with the tears raining from my eyes,
 Stood near the Cyclops, ministering to him ;
 The rest, in the recesses of the cave, 400
 Clung to the rock like bats, bloodless with fear.
 When he was filled with my companions' flesh,
 He threw himself upon the ground and sent
 A loathsome exhalation from his maw.
 Then a divine thought came to me. I filled 405
 The cup of Maron, and I offered him
 To taste, and said :—' Child of the Ocean God,
 Behold what drink the vines of Greece produce,
 The exultation and the joy of Bacchus.'
 He, satiated with his unnatural food, 410
 Received it, and at one draught drank it off,
 And taking my hand, praised me :—' Thou hast given
 A sweet draught after a sweet meal, dear guest.'
 And I, perceiving that it pleased him, filled
 Another cup, well knowing that the wine 415
 Would wound him soon and take a sure revenge.
 And the charm fascinated him, and I
 Plied him cup after cup, until the drink
 Had warmed his entrails, and he sang aloud
 In concert with my wailing fellow-seamen 420
 A hideous discord—and the cavern rung.
 I have stolen out, so that if you will
 You may achieve my safety and your own.
 But say, do you desire, or not, to fly
 This uncompanionable man, and dwell 425
 As was your wont among the Grecian Nymphs
 Within the fanes of your beloved God?
 Your father there within agrees to it,
 But he is weak and overcome with wine,
 And caught as if with bird-lime by the cup, 430
 He claps his wings and crows in doting joy.
 You who are young escape with me, and find
 Bacchus your ancient friend ; unsuited he
 To this rude Cyclops.
Chorus. Oh my dearest friend,
 That I could see that day, and leave for ever 435
 The impious Cyclops.

416 take] grant (*as alternative*) B.

Ulysses. Listen then what a punishment I have
For this fell monster, how secure a flight
From your hard servitude.

Chorus. O sweeter far
Than is the music of an Asian lyre
Would be the news of Polypheme destroyed.

440

Ulysses. Delighted with the Bacchic drink he goes
To call his brother Cyclops—who inhabit
A village upon Aetna not far off.

Chorus. I understand, catching him when alone
You think by some measure to dispatch him,
Or thrust him from the precipice.

445

Ulysses. Oh no ;
Nothing of that kind ; my device is subtle.

Chorus. How then ? I heard of old that thou wert wise.

Ulysses. I will dissuade him from this plan, by saying
It were unwise to give the Cyclopes
This precious drink, which if enjoyed alone
Would make life sweeter for a longer time.
When, vanquished by the Bacchic power, he sleeps,
There is a trunk of olive wood within,
Whose point having made sharp with this good sword
I will conceal in fire, and when I see
It is alight, will fix it, burning yet,
Within the socket of the Cyclops' eye
And melt it out with fire—as when a man
Turns by its handle a great auger round,
Fitting the framework of a ship with beams,
So will I, in the Cyclops' fiery eye
Turn round the brand and dry the pupil up.

450

Chorus. Joy ! I am mad with joy at your device.

465

Ulysses. And then with you, my friends, and the old man,
We'll load the hollow depth of our black ship,
And row with double strokes from this dread shore.

Chorus. May I, as in libations to a God,
Share in the blinding him with the red brand ?
I would have some communion in his death.

470

Ulysses. Doubtless : the brand is a great brand to hold.

Chorus. Oh ! I would lift an hundred waggon-loads,
If like a wasp's nest I could scoop the eye out
Of the detested Cyclops.

Ulysses. Silence now !
Ye know the close device—and when I call,
Look ye obey the masters of the craft.
I will not save myself and leave behind
My comrades in the cave : I might escape,
Having got clear from that obscure recess,
But 'twere unjust to leave in jeopardy
The dear companions who sailed here with me.

475

480

Chorus.

Come! who is first, that with his hand
 Will urge down the burning brand
 Through the lids, and quench and pierce 485
 The Cyclops' eye so fiery fierce?

Semichorus I. (Song within.)

Listen! listen! he is coming,
 A most hideous discord humming.
 Drunken, museless, awkward, yelling,
 Far along his rocky dwelling; 490
 Let us with some comic spell
 Teach the yet unteachable.
 By all means he must be blinded,
 If my counsel be but minded.

Semichorus II.

Happy thou made odorous 495
 With the dew which sweet grapes weep,
 To the village hastening thus,
 Seek the vines that soothe to sleep;
 Having first embraced thy friend,
 Thou in luxury without end, 500
 With the strings of yellow hair,
 Of thy voluptuous leman fair,
 Shalt sit playing on a bed!—
 Speak! what door is opened?

Cyclops.

Ha! ha! ha! I'm full of wine, 505
 Heavy with the joy divine,
 With the young feast oversated;
 Like a merchant's vessel freighted
 To the water's edge, my crop
 Is laden to the gullet's top. 510
 The fresh meadow grass of spring
 Tempts me forth thus wandering
 To my brothers on the mountains,
 Who shall share the wine's sweet fountains.
 Bring the cask, O stranger, bring! 515

Chorus.

One with eyes the fairest
 Cometh from his dwelling:
 Some one loves thee, rarest,
 Bright beyond my telling.
 In thy grace thou shinest 520
 Like some nymph divinest

495 thou *cj.* Swinburne, Rossetti; those 1824; 'the word is doubtful in B.' (Locock).
 Thou B.; There 1824. 508 merchant's 1824; merchant B.

In her caverns dewy :—
 All delights pursue thee,
 Soon pied flowers, sweet-breathing,
 Shall thy head be wreathing.

525

Ulysses. Listen, O Cyclops, for I am well skilled
 In Bacchus, whom I gave thee of to drink.

Cyclops. What sort of God is Bacchus then accounted ?

Ulysses. The greatest among men for joy of life.

Cyclops. I gulped him down with very great delight.

530

Ulysses. This is a God who never injures men.

Cyclops. How does the God like living in a skin ?

Ulysses. He is content wherever he is put.

Cyclops. Gods should not have their body in a skin.

Ulysses. If he gives joy, what is his skin to you ?

535

Cyclops. I hate the skin, but love the wine within.

Ulysses. Stay here now : drink, and make your spirit glad.

Cyclops. Should I not share this liquor with my brothers ?

Ulysses. Keep it yourself, and be more honoured so.

Cyclops. I were more useful, giving to my friends.

540

Ulysses. But village mirth breeds contests, broils, and blows.

Cyclops. When I am drunk none shall lay hands on me.—

Ulysses. A drunken man is better within doors.

Cyclops. He is a fool, who drinking, loves not mirth.

Ulysses. But he is wise, who drunk, remains at home.

545

Cyclops. What shall I do, Silenus ? Shall I stay ?

Silenus. Stay—for what need have you of pot companions ?

Cyclops. Indeed this place is closely carpeted

With flowers and grass.

Silenus. And in the sun-warm noon

'Tis sweet to drink. Lie down beside me now,

550

Placing your mighty sides upon the ground.

Cyclops. What do you put the cup behind me for ?

Silenus. That no one here may touch it.

Cyclops. Thievish one !

You want to drink ;—here place it in the midst.

And thou, O stranger, tell how art thou called ?

555

Ulysses. My name is Nobody. What favour now

Shall I receive to praise you at your hands ?

Cyclops. I'll feast on you the last of your companions.

Ulysses. You grant your guest a fair reward, O Cyclops.

Cyclops. Ha ! what is this ? Stealing the wine, you rogue !

560

Silenus. It was this stranger kissing me because

I looked so beautiful.

Cyclops. You shall repent

For kissing the coy wine that loves you not.

Silenus. By Jupiter ! you said that I am fair.

Cyclops. Pour out, and only give me the cup full.

565

Silenus. How is it mixed ? let me observe.

Cyclops.

Curse you !

537 Stay here now : drink *B.* ; stay here, now drink 1824.

Give it me so.

Silenus. Not till I see you wear
That coronal, and taste the cup to you.

Cyclops. Thou wily traitor!

Silenus. But the wine is sweet.
Ay, you will roar if you are caught in drinking.

570

Cyclops. See now, my lip is clean and all my beard.

Silenus. Now put your elbow right and drink again.
As you see me drink— . . .

Cyclops. How now?

Silenus. Ye Gods, what a delicious gulp!

Cyclops. Guest, take it;—you pour out the wine for me.

575

Ulysses. The wine is well accustomed to my hand.

Cyclops. Pour out the wine!

Ulysses. I pour; only be silent.

Cyclops. Silence is a hard task to him who drinks.

Ulysses. Take it and drink it off; leave not a dreg.
Oh, that the drinker died with his own draught!

580

Cyclops. Papai! the vine must be a sapient plant.

Ulysses. If you drink much after a mighty feast,
Moistening your thirsty maw, you will sleep well;
If you leave aught, Bacchus will dry you up.

Cyclops. Ho! ho! I can scarce rise. What pure delight!

585

The heavens and earth appear to whirl about

Confusedly. I see the throne of Jove

And the clear congregation of the Gods.

Now if the Graces tempted me to kiss

I would not—for the loveliest of them all

590

I would not leave this Ganymede.

Silenus. Polypheme,

I am the Ganymede of Jupiter.

Cyclops. By Jove, you are; I bore you off from Dardanus.

ULYSSES and the CHORUS.

Ulysses. Come, boys of Bacchus, children of high race,

This man within is folded up in sleep,

595

And soon will vomit flesh from his fell maw;

The brand under the shed thrusts out its smoke,

No preparation needs, but to burn out

The monster's eye;—but bear yourselves like men.

Chorus. We will have courage like the adamant rock,

600

All things are ready for you here; go in,

Before our father shall perceive the noise.

Ulysses. Vulcan, Aetnean king! burn out with fire

The shining eye of this thy neighbouring monster!

605

And thou, O Sleep, nursling of gloomy Night,

Descend unmixed on this God-hated beast,

And suffer not Ulysses and his comrades,

Returning from their famous Trojan toils,
To perish by this man, who cares not either
For God or mortal; or I needs must think
That Chance is a supreme divinity,
And things divine are subject to her power.

610

Chorus.

Soon a crab the throat will seize
Of him who feeds upon his guest,
Fire will burn his lamp-like eyes
In revenge of such a feast!

615

A great oak stump now is lying
In the ashes yet undying.

Come, Maron, come!

Raging let him fix the doom,
Let him tear the eyelid up

620

Of the Cyclops—that his cup
May be evil!

Oh! I long to dance and revel
With sweet Bromian, long desired,

625

In loved ivy wreaths attired;
Leaving this abandoned home—
Will the moment ever come?

Ulysses. Be silent, ye wild things! Nay, hold your peace,
And keep your lips quite close; dare not to breathe,
Or spit, or e'en wink, lest ye wake the monster,
Until his eye be tortured out with fire.

630

Chorus. Nay, we are silent, and we chaw the air.

Ulysses. Come now, and lend a hand to the great stake
Within—it is delightfully red hot.

635

Chorus. You then command who first should seize the stake
To burn the Cyclops' eye, that all may share
In the great enterprise.

Semichorus I. We are too far;
We cannot at this distance from the door
Thrust fire into his eye.

Semichorus II. And we just now
Have become lame! cannot move hand or foot.

640

Chorus. The same thing has occurred to us,—our ankles
Are sprained with standing here, I know not how.

Ulysses. What, sprained with standing still?

Chorus. And there is dust
Or ashes in our eyes, I know not whence.

645

Ulysses. Cowardly dogs! ye will not aid me then?

Chorus. With pitying my own back and my back-bone,
And with not wishing all my teeth knocked out,
This cowardice comes of itself—but stay,

I know a famous Orphic incantation
To make the brand stick of its own accord
Into the skull of this one-eyed son of Earth.

650

Ulysses. Of old I knew ye thus by nature; now
 I know ye better.—I will use the aid
 Of my own comrades. Yet though weak of hand
 Speak cheerfully, that so ye may awaken
 The courage of my friends with your blithe words.

655

Chorus. This I will do with peril of my life,
 And blind you with my exhortations, Cyclops.

Hasten and thrust,
 And parch up to dust,
 The eye of the beast
 Who feeds on his guest.

660

Burn and blind
 The Aetnean hind!

665

Scoop and draw,

But beware lest he claw
 Your limbs near his maw.

Cyclops. Ah me! my eyesight is parched up to cinders.

Chorus. What a sweet paean! sing me that again!

670

Cyclops. Ah me! indeed, what woe has fallen upon me!

But, wretched nothings, think ye not to flee

Out of this rock; I, standing at the outlet,

Will bar the way and catch you as you pass.

Chorus. What are you roaring out, Cyclops?

Cyclops.

I perish!

675

Chorus. For you are wicked.

Cyclops. And besides miserable.

Chorus. What, did you fall into the fire when drunk?

Cyclops. 'Twas Nobody destroyed me.

Chorus.

Why then no one

Can be to blame.

Cyclops. I say 'twas Nobody

Who blinded me.

Chorus. Why then you are not blind.

680

Cyclops. I wish you were as blind as I am.

Chorus.

Nay,

It cannot be that no one made you blind.

Cyclops. You jeer me; where, I ask, is Nobody?

Chorus. Nowhere, O Cyclops.

Cyclops. It was that stranger ruined me:—the wretch

685

First gave me wine and then burned out my eye,

For wine is strong and hard to struggle with.

Have they escaped, or are they yet within?

Chorus. They stand under the darkness of the rock
 And cling to it.

Cyclops. At my right hand or left?

690

Chorus. Close on your right.

Cyclops.

Where?

Chorus.

Near the rock itself.

You have them

Cyclops. Oh, misfortune on misfortune!

I've cracked my skull.

Chorus. Now they escape you—there.

Cyclops. Not there, although you say so.

Chorus. Not on that side.

Cyclops. Where then?

Chorus. They creep about you on your left. 695

Cyclops. Ah! I am mocked! They jeer me in my ills.

Chorus. Not there! he is a little there beyond you.

Cyclops. Detested wretch! where are you?

Ulysses. Far from you

I keep with care this body of Ulysses.

Cyclops. What do you say? You proffer a new name. 700

Ulysses. My father named me so; and I have taken

A full revenge for your unnatural feast;

I should have done ill to have burned down Troy

And not revenged the murder of my comrades.

Cyclops. Ai! ai! the ancient oracle is accomplished; 705

It said that I should have my eyesight blinded

By your coming from Troy, yet it foretold

That you should pay the penalty for this

By wandering long over the homeless sea.

Ulysses. I bid thee weep—consider what I say; 710

I go towards the shore to drive my ship

To mine own land, o'er the Sicilian wave.

Cyclops. Not so, if, whelming you with this huge stone,

I can crush you and all your men together;

I will descend upon the shore, though blind, 715

Groping my way adown the steep ravine.

Chorus. And we, the shipmates of Ulysses now,

Will serve our Bacchus all our happy lives.

EPIGRAMS

[These four *Epigrams* were published—nos. II and IV without title—by Mrs. Shelley, *Poetical Works*, 1839, 1st ed.]

I.—TO STELLA

FROM THE GREEK OF PLATO

THOU wert the morning star among the living,

Ere thy fair light had fled;—

Now, having died, thou art as Hesperus, giving

New splendour to the dead.

II.—KISSING HELENA

FROM THE GREEK OF PLATO

KISSING Helena, together

With my kiss, my soul beside it

Came to my lips, and there I kept it,—

For the poor thing had wandered thither,

693 *So B.*; Now they escape you there 1824.

To follow where the kiss should guide it,
Oh, cruel I, to intercept it!

5

III.—SPIRIT OF PLATO

FROM THE GREEK

EAGLE! why soarest thou above that tomb?
To what sublime and star-ypaven home
Floatest thou?—

I am the image of swift Plato's spirit,
Ascending heaven; Athens doth inherit
His corpse below.

5

IV.—CIRCUMSTANCE

FROM THE GREEK

A MAN who was about to hang himself,
Finding a purse, then threw away his rope;
The owner, coming to reclaim his pelf,
The halter found, and used it. So is Hope
Changed for Despair—one laid upon the shelf,
We take the other. Under Heaven's high cope
Fortune is God—all you endure and do
Depends on circumstance as much as you.

5

FRAGMENT OF THE ELEGY ON THE DEATH
OF ADONIS

FROM THE GREEK OF BION

[Published by Forman, *P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1876.]

I MOURN Adonis dead—loveliest Adonis—
Dead, dead Adonis—and the Loves lament.
Sleep no more, Venus, wrapped in purple woof—
Wake violet-stolèd queen, and weave the crown
Of Death,—'tis Misery calls,—for he is dead.

5

The lovely one lies wounded in the mountains,
His white thigh struck with the white tooth; he scarce
Yet breathes; and Venus hangs in agony there.
The dark blood wanders o'er his snowy limbs,
His eyes beneath their lids are lustreless,
The rose has fled from his wan lips, and there
That kiss is dead, which Venus gathers yet.

10

A deep, deep wound Adonis . . .
A deeper Venus bears upon her heart.
See, his belovèd dogs are gathering round—
The Oread nymphs are weeping—Aphrodite
With hair unbound is wandering through the woods,
'Wildered, ungirt, unsandalled—the thorns pierce
Her hastening feet and drink her sacred blood.

15

Spirit of Plato.—5 doth *Boscombe MS.*: does *ed.* 1839.

FROM THE GREEK OF MOSCHUS

[Published with *Alastor*, 1816.]*Τὰν ἄλα τὰν γλαυκὰν ὅταν ὤνεμος ἀτρέμα βάλλῃ—κ.τ.λ.*

WHEN winds that move not its calm surface sweep
 The azure sea, I love the land no more;
 The smiles of the serene and tranquil deep
 Tempt my unquiet mind.—But when the roar
 Of Ocean's gray abyss resounds, and foam
 Gathers upon the sea, and vast waves burst,
 I turn from the drear aspect to the home
 Of Earth and its deep woods, where, interspersed,
 When winds blow loud, pines make sweet melody.
 Whose house is some lone bark, whose toil the sea,
 Whose prey the wandering fish, an evil lot
 Has chosen.—But I my languid limbs will fling
 Beneath the plane, where the brook's murmuring
 Moves the calm spirit, but disturbs it not.

5

10

PAN, ECHO, AND THE SATYR

FROM THE GREEK OF MOSCHUS

[Published (without title) by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824. There is a draft amongst the Hunt MSS.]

PAN loved his neighbour Echo—but that child
 Of Earth and Air pined for the Satyr leaping;
 The Satyr loved with wasting madness wild
 The bright nymph Lyda,—and so three went weeping.
 As Pan loved Echo, Echo loved the Satyr,
 The Satyr, Lyda; and so love consumed them.—
 And thus to each—which was a woful matter—
 To bear what they inflicted Justice doomed them;
 For, inasmuch as each might hate the lover,
 Each, loving, so was hated.—Ye that love not
 Be warned—in thought turn this example over,
 That when ye love, the like return ye prove not.

5

10

FROM VERGIL'S TENTH ECLOGUE

[Vv. 1-26]

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870, from the Boscombe MSS. now in the Bodleian. Mr. Locock (*Examination*, &c., 1903, pp. 47-50), as the result of his collation of the same MSS., gives a revised and expanded version which we print below.]

MELODIOUS Arethusa, o'er my verse
 Shed thou once more the spirit of thy stream:
 Who denies verse to Gallus? So, when thou
 Glidest beneath the green and purple gleam

Pan, Echo, &c.—6 so *Hunt MS.*; thus 1824. 11 So 1824; This lesson timely in your thoughts turn over, The moral of this song in thought turn over (as alternatives) *Hunt MS.*

Of Syracusan waters, mayst thou flow 5
 Unmingled with the bitter Doric dew!
 Begin, and, whilst the goats are browsing now
 The soft leaves, in our way let us pursue
 The melancholy loves of Gallus. List!
 We sing not to the dead: the wild woods knew 10
 His sufferings, and their echoes . . .
 Young Naiads, . . . in what far woodlands wild
 Wandered ye when unworthy love possessed
 Your Gallus? Not where Pindus is up-piled,
 Nor where Parnassus' sacred mount, nor where 15
 Aonian Aganippe expands . . .
 The laurels and the myrtle-copses dim.
 The pine-encircled mountain, Maenalus,
 The cold crags of Lycaeus, weep for him;
 And Sylvan, crowned with rustic coronals, 20
 Came shaking in his speed the budding wands
 And heavy lilies which he bore: we knew
 Pan the Arcadian.

'What madness is this, Gallus? Thy heart's care
 With willing steps pursues another there.' 25

THE SAME

(As revised by Mr. C. D. Locock.)

MELODIOUS Arethusa, o'er my verse
 Shed thou once more the spirit of thy stream:
 (Two lines missing)
 Who denies verse to Gallus? So, when thou
 Glidest beneath the green and purple gleam
 Of Syracusan waters, mayest thou flow 5
 Unmingled with the bitter Dorian dew!
 Begin, and whilst the goats are browsing now
 The soft leaves, in our song let us pursue
 The melancholy loves of Gallus. List!
 We sing not to the deaf: the wild woods knew 10
 His sufferings, and their echoes answer . . .
 Young Naiades, in what far woodlands wild
 Wandered ye, when unworthy love possessed
 Our Gallus? Nor where Pindus is up-piled,
 Nor where Parnassus' sacred mount, nor where 15
 Aonian Aganippe spreads its . . .
 (Three lines missing)
 The laurels and the myrtle-copses dim,
 The pine-encircled mountain, Maenalus,
 The cold crags of Lycaeus weep for him.
 (Several lines missing)
 'What madness is this, Gallus? thy heart's care, 20

Lycoris, mid rude camps and Alpine snow,
With willing step pursues another there.'

(Some lines missing)

And Sylvan, crowned with rustic coronals,
Came shaking in his speed the budding wands
And heavy lilies which he bore: we knew
Pan the Arcadian with

25

. . . and said,
'Wilt thou not ever cease? Love cares not.
The meadows with fresh streams, the bees with thyme,
The goats with the green leaves of budding spring
Are saturated not—nor Love with tears.'

30

FROM VERGIL'S FOURTH GEORGIC

[Vv. 360 et seq.]

[Published by Locock, *Examination*, &c., 1903.]

AND the cloven waters like a chasm of mountains
Stood, and received him in its mighty portal
And led him through the deep's untrampled fountains
He went in wonder through the path immortal
Of his great Mother and her humid reign
And groves profaned not by the step of mortal
Which sounded as he passed, and lakes which rain
Replenished not girt round by marble caves
'Wildered by the watery motion of the main
Half 'wildered he beheld the bursting waves
Of every stream beneath the mighty earth
Phasis and Lycus which the sand paves,
[And] The chasm where old Enipeus has its birth
And father Tyber and Anienas [?] glow
And whence Caicus, Mysian stream, comes forth
And rock-resounding Hypanis, and thou
Eridanus who bearest like empire's sign
Two golden horns upon thy taurine brow
Thou than whom none of the streams divine
Through garden-fields and meads with fiercer power,
Burst in their tumult on the purple brine

5

10

15

20

SONNET

FROM THE ITALIAN OF DANTE

[Published with *Alastor*, 1816; reprinted, *P. P.*, 1824.]

Dante Alighieri to Guido Cavalcanti

GUIDO, I would that Lapo, thou, and I,
Led by some strong enchantment, might ascend
A magic ship, whose charmed sails should fly

With winds at will where'er our thoughts might wend,
 So that no change, nor any evil chance
 Should mar our joyous voyage; but it might be,
 That even satiety should still enhance
 Between our hearts their strict community:
 And that the bounteous wizard then would place
 Vanna and Bice and my gentle love,
 Companions of our wandering, and would grace
 With passionate talk, wherever we might rove,
 Our time, and each were as content and free
 As I believe that thou and I should be.

5

10

THE FIRST CANZONE OF THE CONVITO

FROM THE ITALIAN OF DANTE

[Published by Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862; dated 1820.]

I

YE who intelligent the Third Heaven move,
 Hear the discourse which is within my heart,
 Which cannot be declared, it seems so new.
 The Heaven whose course follows your power and art,
 Oh, gentle creatures that ye are! me drew,
 And therefore may I dare to speak to you,
 Even of the life which now I live—and yet
 I pray that ye will hear me when I cry,
 And tell of mine own heart this novelty;
 How the lamenting Spirit moans in it,
 And how a voice there murmurs against her
 Who came on the refulgence of your sphere.

5

10

II

A sweet Thought, which was once the life within
 This heavy heart; many a time and oft
 Went up before our Father's feet, and there
 It saw a glorious Lady throned aloft;
 And its sweet talk of her my soul did win,
 So that I said, 'Thither I too will fare.'
 That Thought is fled, and one doth now appear
 Which tyrannizes me with such fierce stress,
 That my heart trembles—ye may see it leap—
 And on another Lady bids me keep
 Mine eyes, and says—Who would have blessedness
 Let him but look upon that Lady's eyes,
 Let him not fear the agony of sighs.

15

20

25

III

This lowly Thought, which once would talk with me
 Of a bright seraph sitting crowned on high,
 Found such a cruel foe it died, and so

Sonnet.—5 So 1824; And 1816.

My Spirit wept, the grief is hot even now—
 And said, Alas for me! how swift could flee 30
 That piteous Thought which did my life console!
 And the afflicted one questioning
 Mine eyes, if such a Lady saw they never,
 And why they would . . .
 I said: 'Beneath those eyes might stand for ever 35
 He whom regards must kill with . . .
 To have known their power stood me in little stead,
 Those eyes have looked on me, and I am dead.'

IV

'Thou art not dead, but thou hast wanderèd,
 Thou Soul of ours, who thyself dost fret,' 40
 A Spirit of gentle Love beside me said;
 For that fair Lady, whom thou dost regret,
 Hath so transformed the life which thou hast led,
 Thou scornest it, so worthless art thou made.
 And see how meek, how pitiful, how staid, 45
 Yet courteous, in her majesty she is.
 And still call thou her Woman in thy thought;
 Her whom, if thou thyself deceivest not,
 Thou wilt behold decked with such loveliness,
 That thou wilt cry [Love] only Lord, lo! here 50
 Thy handmaiden, do what thou wilt with her.

VI

My song, I fear that thou wilt find but few
 Who fitly shall conceive thy reasoning
 Of such hard matter dost thou entertain.
 Whence, if by misadventure chance should bring 55
 Thee to base company, as chance may do,
 Quite unaware of what thou dost contain,
 I prithee comfort thy sweet self again,
 My last delight; tell them that they are dull,
 And bid them own that thou art beautiful. 60

MATILDA GATHERING FLOWERS

FROM THE PURGATORIO OF DANTE, CANTO XXVIII, ll. 1-51

[Published in part (ll. 1-8, 22-51) by Medwin, *The Angler in Wales*, 1834, *Life of Shelley*, 1847; reprinted in full by Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.]

AND earnest to explore within—around—
 The divine wood, whose thick green living woof
 Tempered the young day to the sight—I wound

2 The 1862; That 1834.

1 Published with *Epipsychidion*, 1821.—ED.

Up the green slope, beneath the forest's roof,
With slow, soft steps leaving the mountain's steep,
And sought those inmost labyrinths, motion-proof

5

Against the air, that in that stillness deep
And solemn, struck upon my forehead bare,
The slow, soft stroke of a continuous . . .

In which the leaves tremblingly were
All bent towards that part where earliest
The sacred hill obscures the morning air,

10

Yet were they not so shaken from the rest,
But that the birds, perched on the utmost spray,
Incessantly renewing their blithe quest,

15

With perfect joy received the early day,
Singing within the glancing leaves, whose sound
Kept a low burden to their roundelay,

Such as from bough to bough gathers around
The pine forest on bleak Chiassi's shore,
When Aeolus Sirocco has unbound.

20

My slow steps had already borne me o'er
Such space within the antique wood, that I
Perceived not where I entered any more,—

When, lo! a stream whose little waves went by,
Bending towards the left through grass that grew
Upon its bank, impeded suddenly

25

My going on. Water of purest hue
On earth, would appear turbid and impure
Compared with this, whose unconcealing dew,

30

Dark, dark, yet clear, moved under the obscure
Eternal shades, whose interwoven looms
The rays of moon or sunlight ne'er endure.

4, 5 *So 1862*;

Up a green slope, beneath the starry roof,
With slow, slow steps— *1834*.

6 inmost *1862*; leafy *1834*.

9 *So 1862*; The slow, soft stroke of a continuous sleep *cf. Rossetti, 1870*.

9-28 *So 1862*;

Like the sweet breathing of a child asleep:

Already I had lost myself so far

Amid that tangled wilderness that I

Perceived not where I ventured, but no fear

Of wandering from my way disturbed, when nigh

A little stream appeared; the grass that grew

Thick on its banks impeded suddenly

My going on. *1834*.

13 the *1862*; their *cf. Rossetti, 1870*.

1834. 30 dew *1862*; hue *1834*.

33 *So 1862*; No ray of moon or sunshine would endure *1834*.

26 through] the *cf. Rossetti*.

28 hue *1862*; dew

32 Eternal shades *1862*; Of the close boughs *1834*.

I moved not with my feet, but mid the glooms
 Pierced with my charmed eye, contemplating 35
 The mighty multitude of fresh May blooms
 Which starred that night, when, even as a thing
 That suddenly, for blank astonishment,
 Charms every sense, and makes all thought take wing,—
 A solitary woman! and she went 40
 Singing and gathering flower after flower,
 With which her way was painted and besprent.
 'Bright lady, who, if looks had ever power
 To bear true witness of the heart within,
 Dost bask under the beams of love, come lower 45
 Towards this bank. I prithee let me win
 This much of thee, to come, that I may hear
 Thy song: like Proserpine, in Enna's glen,
 Thou seemest to my fancy, singing here
 And gathering flowers, as that fair maiden when 50
 She lost the Spring, and Ceres her, more dear.'

FRAGMENT

ADAPTED FROM THE VITA NUOVA OF DANTE

[Published by Forman, *P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1876.]

WHAT Mary is when she a little smiles
 I cannot even tell or call to mind,
 It is a miracle so new, so rare.

UGOLINO¹

INFERNO xxxiii. 22-75

[Translated by Medwin and corrected by Shelley.]

Now had the loophole of that dungeon, still
 Which bears the name of Famine's Tower from me,
 And where 'tis fit that many another will

Be doomed to linger in captivity,
 Shown through its narrow opening in my cell 5
Moon after moon slow waning, when a sleep,

*That of the future burst the veil, in dream
 Visited me. It was a slumber deep
 And evil; for I saw, or I did seem*

34, 35 *So 1862*;

My feet were motionless, but mid the glooms
 Darted my charmed eyes— 1834.

37 Which 1834; That 1862. 39 *So 1834*; Dissolves all other thought . . . 1862. 40 *So 1862*; Appeared a solitary maid—she went 1834. 46 Towards 1862; Unto 1834. 47 thec, to come 1862; thee O come 1834.

¹ Published by Medwin, *Life of Shelley*, 1847, with Shelley's corrections in italics.—ED.

To see, *that* tyrant Lord his revels keep,
 The leader of the cruel hunt to them,
 Chasing the wolf and wolf-cubs up the steep

10

Ascent, that from *the Pisan is the screen*
 Of *Lucca*; with him Gualandi came,
 Sismondi, and Lanfranchi, *bloodhounds lean*,

15

Trained to the sport and eager for the game
Wide ranging in his front; but soon were seen
 Though by so short a course, with *spirits tame*,

The father and *his whelps* to flag at once,
 And then the sharp fangs gored their bosoms deep.
 Ere morn I roused myself, and heard my sons,

20

For they were with me, moaning in their sleep,
 And begging bread. Ah, for those darling ones!
 Right cruel art thou, if thou dost not weep

In thinking of my soul's sad augury;
 And if thou weapest not now, weep never more!
 They were already waked, as wont drew nigh

25

The allotted hour for food, and in that hour
 Each drew a presage from his dream. When I
Heard locked beneath me of that horrible tower

30

The outlet; then into their eyes alone
I looked to read myself, without a sign
 Or word. I wept not—turned within to stone.

They wept aloud, and little Anselm mine,
 Said—'twas my youngest, dearest little one,—
 'What ails thee, father? Why look so at thine?'

35

In all that day, and all the following night,
 I wept not, nor replied; but when to shine
 Upon the world, not us, came forth the light

Of the new sun, and thwart my prison thrown
 Gleamed through its narrow chink, a doleful sight,
Three faces, each the reflex of my own,

40

Were imaged by its faint and ghastly ray;
 Then I, of either hand unto the bone,
 Gnawed, in my agony; and thinking they

45

'Twas done from sudden pangs, in their excess,
 All of a sudden raise themselves, and say,
 'Father! our woes, so great, were yet the less

Would you but eat of us,—'twas *you who clad*
Our bodies in these weeds of wretchedness;
Despoil them.' Not to make their hearts more sad,

50

I *hushed* myself. That day is at its close,—
Another—still we were all mute. Oh, had
The obdurate earth opened to end our woes!

The fourth day dawned, and when the new sun shone,
Outstretched himself before me as it rose
My Gaddo, saying, 'Help, father! hast thou none

For thine own child—is there no help from thee?'
He died—there at my feet—and one by one,
I saw them fall, plainly as you see me,

Between the fifth and sixth day, ere 'twas dawn,
I found *myself blind-groping o'er the three*.
Three days I called them after they were gone.

Famine of grief can get the mastery.

SONNET

FROM THE ITALIAN OF CAVALCANTI

GUIDO CAVALCANTI TO DANTE ALIGHIERI

[Published by Forman (who assigns it to 1815), *P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1876.]

RETURNING from its daily quest, my Spirit
Changed thoughts and vile in thee doth weep to find:
It grieves me that thy mild and gentle mind
Those ample virtues which it did inherit
Has lost. Once thou didst loathe the multitude
Of blind and madding men—I then loved thee—
I loved thy lofty songs and that sweet mood
When thou wert faithful to thyself and me.
I dare not now through thy degraded state
Own the delight thy strains inspire—in vain
I seek what once thou wert—we cannot meet
And we were wont. Again and yet again
Ponder my words: so the false Spirit shall fly
And leave to thee thy true integrity.

SCENES FROM THE MAGICO PRODIGIOSO

FROM THE SPANISH OF CALDERON

[Published by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824; dated March, 1822.
There is a transcript of Scene I among the Hunt MSS., which has been collated by
Mr. Buxton Forman.]

SCENE I.—*Enter CYPRIAN, dressed as a Student; CLARIN and MOSCON as poor
Scholars, with books.*

Cyprian. In the sweet solitude of this calm place,
This intricate wild wilderness of trees
And flowers and undergrowth of odorous plants,
Leave me; the books you brought out of the house

To me are ever best society.
 And while with glorious festival and song,
 Antioch now celebrates the consecration
 Of a proud temple to great Jupiter,
 And bears his image in loud jubilee
 To its new shrine, I would consume what still
 Lives of the dying day in studious thought,
 Far from the throng and turmoil. You, my friends,
 Go, and enjoy the festival; it will
 Be worth your pains. You may return for me
 When the sun seeks its grave among the billows
 Which, among dim gray clouds on the horizon,
 Dance like white plumes upon a hearse;—and here
 I shall expect you.

Moscon. I cannot bring my mind,
 Great as my haste to see the festival
 Certainly is, to leave you, Sir, without
 Just saying some three or four thousand words.
 How is it possible that on a day
 Of such festivity, you can be content
 To come forth to a solitary country
 With three or four old books, and turn your back
 On all this mirth?

Clarín. My master's in the right;
 There is not anything more tiresome
 Than a procession day, with troops, and priests,
 And dances, and all that.

Moscon. From first to last,
 Clarín, you are a temporizing flatterer;
 You praise not what you feel but what he does;—
 Toadeater!

Clarín. You lie—under a mistake—
 For this is the most civil sort of lie
 That can be given to a man's face. I now
 Say what I think.

Cyprian. Enough, you foolish fellows!
 Puffed up with your own doting ignorance,
 You always take the two sides of one question.
 Now go; and as I said, return for me
 When night falls, veiling in its shadows wide
 This glorious fabric of the universe.

Moscon. How happens it, although you can maintain
 The folly of enjoying festivals,
 That yet you go there?

14 *So transcr.*; Be worth the labour, and return for me 1824. 16, 17 *So* 1824;

Hid among dim gray clouds on the horizon
 Which dance like plumes—*transcr.*, *Forman*.

21 thousand *transcr.*; hundred 1824.

28 and priests *transcr.*; of men 1824.

23 be content *transcr.*; bring your mind 1824.

36 doting ignorance *transcr.*; ignorance and pride 1824.

Clarín. Nay, the consequence
Is clear:—who ever did what he advises
Others to do?—

Moscon. Would that my feet were wings,
So would I fly to Livia.

45
[*Exit.*

Clarín. To speak truth,
Livia is she who has surprised my heart;
But he is more than half-way there.—Soho!
Livia, I come; good sport, Livia, soho!

[*Exit.*

Cyprian. Now, since I am alone, let me examine
The question which has long disturbed my mind
With doubt, since first I read in Plinius
The words of mystic import and deep sense
In which he defines God. My intellect
Can find no God with whom these marks and signs
Fitly agree. It is a hidden truth
Which I must fathom.

50

55

[*CYPRIAN reads; the DAEMON, dressed in a Court dress, enters.*

Daemon. Search even as thou wilt,
But thou shalt never find what I can hide.

Cyprian. What noise is that among the boughs? Who moves?
What art thou?—

Daemon. 'Tis a foreign gentleman.
Even from this morning I have lost my way
In this wild place; and my poor horse at last,
Quite overcome, has stretched himself upon
The enamelled tapestry of this mossy mountain,
And feeds and rests at the same time. I was
Upon my way to Antioch upon business
Of some importance, but wrapped up in cares
(Who is exempt from this inheritance?)
I parted from my company, and lost
My way, and lost my servants and my comrades.

60

65

70

Cyprian. 'Tis singular that even within the sight
Of the high towers of Antioch you could lose
Your way. Of all the avenues and green paths
Of this wild wood there is not one but leads,
As to its centre, to the walls of Antioch;
Take which you will, you cannot miss your road.

75

Daemon. And such is ignorance! Even in the sight
Of knowledge, it can draw no profit from it.
But as it still is early, and as I
Have no acquaintances in Antioch,
Being a stranger there, I will even wait
The few surviving hours of the day,
Until the night shall conquer it. I see
Both by your dress and by the books in which
You find delight and company, that you
Are a great student;—for my part, I feel

80

85

Much sympathy in such pursuits.

Cyprian. Have you
Studied much?

Daemon. No,—and yet I know enough
Not to be wholly ignorant.

Cyprian. Pray, Sir,
What science may you know?—

Daemon. Many.

Cyprian. Alas!

Much pains must we expend on one alone,
And even then attain it not;—but you
Have the presumption to assert that you
Know many without study.

Daemon. And with truth.
For in the country whence I come the sciences
Require no learning,—they are known.

Cyprian. Oh, would
I were of that bright country! for in this
The more we study, we the more discover
Our ignorance.

Daemon. It is so true, that I
Had so much arrogance as to oppose
The chair of the most high Professorship,
And obtained many votes, and, though I lost,
The attempt was still more glorious, than the failure
Could be dishonourable. If you believe not,
Let us refer it to dispute respecting
That which you know the best, and although I
Know not the opinion you maintain, and though
It be the true one, I will take the contrary.

Cyprian. The offer gives me pleasure. I am now
Debating with myself upon a passage
Of Plinius, and my mind is racked with doubt
To understand and know who is the God
Of whom he speaks.

Daemon. It is a passage, if
I recollect it right, couched in these words:
'God is one supreme goodness, one pure essence,
One substance, and one sense, all sight, all hands.'

Cyprian. 'Tis true.

Daemon. What difficulty find you here?

Cyprian. I do not recognize among the Gods
The God defined by Plinius; if he must
Be supreme goodness, even Jupiter
Is not supremely good; because we see
His deeds are evil, and his attributes
Tainted with mortal weakness; in what manner
Can supreme goodness be consistent with

87 in *transcr.*; with 1824.
wanting, 1824.

95 come the sciences] come sciences 1824.

106 the *transcr.*;

The passions of humanity?

Daemon. The wisdom
Of the old world masked with the names of Gods
The attributes of Nature and of Man;
A sort of popular philosophy. 125

Cyprian. This reply will not satisfy me, for
Such awe is due to the high name of God
That ill should never be imputed. Then,
Examining the question with more care,
It follows, that the Gods would always will
That which is best, were they supremely good.
How then does one will one thing, one another?
And that you may not say that I allege
Poetical or philosophic learning:—
Consider the ambiguous responses
Of their oracular statues; from two shrines
Two armies shall obtain the assurance of
One victory. Is it not indisputable
That two contending wills can never lead
To the same end? And, being opposite,
If one be good, is not the other evil?
Evil in God is inconceivable;
But supreme goodness fails among the Gods
Without their union. 130 135 140 145

Daemon. I deny your major.
These responses are means towards some end
Unfathomed by our intellectual beam.
They are the work of Providence, and more
The battle's loss may profit those who lose,
Than victory advantage those who win. 150

Cyprian. That I admit; and yet that God should not
(Falsehood is incompatible with deity)
Assure the victory; it would be enough
To have permitted the defeat. If God
Be all sight,—God, who had beheld the truth,
Would not have given assurance of an end
Never to be accomplished: thus, although
The Deity may according to his attributes
Be well distinguished into persons, yet
Even in the minutest circumstance
His essence must be one. 155 160

Daemon. To attain the end
The affections of the actors in the scene
Must have been thus influenced by his voice. 165

Cyprian. But for a purpose thus subordinate
He might have employed Genii, good or evil,—
A sort of spirits called so by the learned,
Who roam about inspiring good or evil,
And from whose influence and existence we 170

May well infer our immortality.
 Thus God might easily, without descent
 To a gross falsehood in his proper person,
 Have moved the affections by this mediation
 To the just point.

Daemon. . . . These trifling contradictions
 Do not suffice to impugn the unity
 Of the high Gods; in things of great importance
 They still appear unanimous; consider
 That glorious fabric, man,—his workmanship
 Is stamped with one conception.

Cyprian. . . . Who made man
 Must have, methinks, the advantage of the others.
 If they are equal, might they not have risen
 In opposition to the work, and being
 All hands, according to our author here,
 Have still destroyed even as the other made?
 If equal in their power, unequal only
 In opportunity, which of the two
 Will remain conqueror?

Daemon. . . . On impossible
 And false hypothesis there can be built
 No argument. Say, what do you infer
 From this?

Cyprian. That there must be a mighty God
 Of supreme goodness and of highest grace,
 All sight, all hands, all truth, infallible,
 Without an equal and without a rival,
 The cause of all things and the effect of nothing,
 One power, one will, one substance, and one essence.
 And, in whatever persons, one or two,
 His attributes may be distinguished, one
 Sovereign power, one solitary essence,
 One cause of all cause.

Daemon. . . . How can I impugn
 So clear a consequence?

Cyprian. . . . Do you regret
 My victory?

Daemon. Who but regrets a check
 In rivalry of wit? I could reply
 And urge new difficulties, but will now
 Depart, for I hear steps of men approaching,
 And it is time that I should now pursue
 My journey to the city.

Cyprian. . . . Go in peace!

Daemon. Remain in peace!—Since thus it profits him
 To study, I will wrap his senses up
 In sweet oblivion of all thought but of

172 descent *transcr.*; descending 1824. 186 unequal only *transcr.*; and only unequal 1824.
 197 And] *query*, Ay? 200 all cause 1824; all things *transcr.*

175

180

185

190

195

[*They rise.*

200

205

210

A piece of excellent beauty; and, as I
Have power given me to wage enmity
Against Justina's soul, I will extract
From one effect two vengeancees.

[*Aside and exit.*

Cyprian. I never
Met a more learnèd person. Let me now
Revolve this doubt again with careful mind.

215

[*He reads.*

FLORO and LELIO enter.

Lelio. Here stop. These toppling rocks and tangled boughs,
Impenetrable by the noonday beam,
Shall be sole witnesses of what we——

Floro. Draw!

If there were words, here is the place for deeds.

220

Lelio. Thou heedest not instruct me; well I know
That in the field, the silent tongue of steel
Speaks thus,—

[*They fight.*

Cyprian. Ha! what is this? *Lelio*,—*Floro*,
Be it enough that *Cyprian* stands between you,
Although unarmed.

Lelio. Whence comest thou, to stand
Between me and my vengeance?

225

Floro. From what rocks
And desert cells?

Enter MOSCON and CLARIN.

Moscon. Run! run! for where we left
My master, I now hear the clash of swords.

Clarín. I never run to approach things of this sort,
But only to avoid them. Sir! *Cyprian*! sir!

230

Cyprian. Be silent, fellows! What! two friends who are
In blood and fame the eyes and hope of Antioch,
One of the noble race of the Colalti,
The other son o' the Governor, adventure
And cast away, on some slight cause no doubt,
Two lives, the honour of their country?

235

Lelio. *Cyprian*!
Although my high respect towards your person
Holds now my sword suspended, thou canst not
Restore it to the slumber of the scabbard:
Thou knowest more of science than the duel;
For when two men of honour take the field,
No counsel nor respect can make them friends
But one must die in the dispute.

240

Floro. I pray
That you depart hence with your people, and

214 Stage direction: So transcr.; Exit 1824.

228 I now hear transcr.; we hear 1824.

227-9 lines otherwise arranged. 1824.

233 race transcr.; men 1824.

Colalti] Colatti 1824.

239 of the transcr.; of its 1824.

242 No counsel nor 1839, 1st ed.; No [

] or 1824;

No reasoning or transcr.

243 dispute transcr.; pursuit 1824.

Leave us to finish what we have begun
Without advantage.—

245

Cyprian. Though you may imagine
That I know little of the laws of duel,
Which vanity and valour instituted,
You are in error. By my birth I am
Held no less than yourselves to know the limits
Of honour and of infamy, nor has study
Quenched the free spirit which first ordered them;
And thus to me, as one well experienced
In the false quicksands of the sea of honour,
You may refer the merits of the case;
And if I should perceive in your relation
That either has the right to satisfaction
From the other, I give you my word of honour
To leave you.

250

255

Lelio. Under this condition then
I will relate the cause, and you will cede
And must confess the impossibility
Of compromise; for the same lady is
Beloved by Floro and myself.

260

Floro. It seems
Much to me that the light of day should look
Upon that idol of my heart—but he——
Leave us to fight, according to thy word.

265

Cyprian. Permit one question further: is the lady
Impossible to hope or not?

Lelio. She is
So excellent, that if the light of day
Should excite Floro's jealousy, it were
Without just cause, for even the light of day
Trembles to gaze on her.

270

Cyprian. Would you for your
Part, marry her?

Floro. Such is my confidence.

Cyprian. And you?

Lelio. Oh! would that I could lift my hope
So high, for though she is extremely poor,
Her virtue is her dowry.

275

Cyprian. And if you both
Would marry her, is it not weak and vain,
Culpable and unworthy, thus beforehand
To slur her honour? What would the world say
If one should slay the other, and if she
Should afterwards espouse the murderer?

280

[*The rivals agree to refer their quarrel to CYPRIAN; who in consequence visits JUSTINA, and becomes enamoured of her; she disdains him, and he retires to a solitary sea-shore.*

SCENE II

Cyprian.

O memory ! permit it not
 That the tyrant of my thought
 Be another soul that still
 Holds dominion o'er the will,
 That would refuse, but can no more, 5
 To bend, to tremble, and adore.
 Vain idolatry !—I saw,
 And gazing, became blind with error ;
 Weak ambition, which the awe
 Of her presence bound to terror ! 10
 So beautiful she was—and I,
 Between my love and jealousy,
 Am so convulsed with hope and fear,
 Unworthy as it may appear ;—
 So bitter is the life I live, 15
 That, hear me, Hell ! I now would give
 To thy most detested spirit
 My soul, for ever to inherit,
 To suffer punishment and pine,
 So this woman may be mine. 20
 Hear'st thou, Hell ! dost thou reject it ?
 My soul is offered !

Daemon (unseen). I accept it.*[Tempest, with thunder and lightning.]**Cyprian.*

What is this ? ye heavens for ever pure,
 At once intensely radiant and obscure !
 Athwart the aethereal halls 25
 The lightning's arrow and the thunder-balls
 The day affright,
 As from the horizon round,
 Burst with earthquake sound,
 In mighty torrents the electric fountains ;— 30
 Clouds quench the sun, and thunder-smoke
 Strangles the air, and fire eclipses Heaven.
 Philosophy, thou canst not even
 Compel their causes underneath thy yoke :
 From yonder clouds even to the waves below 35
 The fragments of a single ruin choke
 Imagination's flight ;
 For, on flakes of surge, like feathers light,
 The ashes of the desolation, cast
 Upon the gloomy blast, 40
 Tell of the footsteps of the storm ;
 And nearer, see, the melancholy form
 Of a great ship, the outcast of the sea,
 Drives miserably !

And it must fly the pity of the port,
 Or perish, and its last and sole resort
 Is its own raging enemy.
 The terror of the thrilling cry
 Was a fatal prophecy
 Of coming death, who hovers now
 Upon that shattered prow,
 That they who die not may be dying still.
 And not alone the insane elements
 Are populous with wild portents,
 But that sad ship is as a miracle
 Of sudden ruin, for it drives so fast
 It seems as if it had arrayed its form
 With the headlong storm.
 It strikes—I almost feel the shock,—
 It stumbles on a jagged rock,—
 Sparkles of blood on the white foam are cast. [*A tempest.*]

All exclaim (within). We are all lost!

Daemon (within). Now from this plank will I
 Pass to the land and thus fulfil my scheme.

Cyprian.

As in contempt of the elemental rage
 A man comes forth in safety, while the ship's
 Great form is in a watery eclipse
 Obliterated from the Ocean's page,
 And round its wreck the huge sea-monsters sit,
 A horrid conclave, and the whistling wave
 Is heaped over its carcase, like a grave.

The DAEMON enters, as escaped from the sea.

Daemon (aside). It was essential to my purposes
 To wake a tumult on the sapphire ocean,
 That in this unknown form I might at length
 Wipe out the blot of the discomfiture
 Sustained upon the mountain, and assail
 With a new war the soul of Cyprian,
 Forging the instruments of his destruction
 Even from his love and from his wisdom.—O
 Belovèd earth, dear mother, in thy bosom
 I seek a refuge from the monster who
 Precipitates itself upon me.

Cyprian. Friend,
 Collect thyself; and be the memory
 Of thy late suffering, and thy greatest sorrow
 But as a shadow of the past,—for nothing
 Beneath the circle of the moon, but flows
 And changes, and can never know repose.

Daemon. And who art thou, before whose feet my fate
 Has prostrated me?

Cyprian. One who, moved with pity,
Would soothe its stings.

Daemon. Oh, that can never be!
No solace can my lasting sorrows find.

Cyprian. Wherefore?

Daemon. Because my happiness is lost,
Yet I lament what has long ceased to be
The object of desire or memory,
And my life is not life.

Cyprian. Now, since the fury
Of this earthquaking hurricane is still,
And the crystalline Heaven has reassumed
Its windless calm so quickly, that it seems
As if its heavy wrath had been awakened
Only to overwhelm that vessel,—speak,
Who art thou, and whence comest thou?

Daemon. Far more
My coming hither cost, than thou hast seen
Or I can tell. Among my misadventures
This shipwreck is the least. Wilt thou hear?

Cyprian. Speak.

Daemon. Since thou desirest, I will then unveil
Myself to thee;—for in myself I am
A world of happiness and misery;
This I have lost, and that I must lament
Forever. In my attributes I stood
So high and so heroically great,
In lineage so supreme, and with a genius
Which penetrated with a glance the world
Beneath my feet, that, won by my high merit,
A king—whom I may call the King of kings,
Because all others tremble in their pride
Before the terrors of His countenance,
In His high palace roofed with brightest gems
Of living light—call them the stars of Heaven—
Named me His counsellor. But the high praise
Stung me with pride and envy, and I rose
In mighty competition, to ascend
His seat and place my foot triumphantly
Upon His subject thrones. Chastised, I know
The depth to which ambition falls; too mad
Was the attempt, and yet more mad were now
Repentance of the irrevocable deed :—
Therefore I chose this ruin, with the glory
Of not to be subdued, before the shame
Of reconciling me with Him who reigns
By coward cession.—Nor was I alone,
Nor am I now, nor shall I be alone;
And there was hope, and there may still be hope,
For many suffrages among His vassals

Hailed me their lord and king, and many still
 Are mine, and many more, perchance shall be.
 Thus vanquished, though in fact victorious, 135
 I left His seat of empire, from mine eye
 Shooting forth poisonous lightning, while my words
 With inauspicious thunderings shook Heaven,
 Proclaiming vengeance, public as my wrong,
 And imprecating on His prostrate slaves 140
 Rapine, and death, and outrage. Then I sailed
 Over the mighty fabric of the world,—
 A pirate ambushed in its pathless sands,
 A lynx crouched watchfully among its caves
 And craggy shores; and I have wandered over 145
 The expanse of these wide wildernesses
 In this great ship, whose bulk is now dissolved
 In the light breathings of the invisible wind,
 And which the sea has made a dustless ruin,
 Seeking ever a mountain, through whose forests 150
 I seek a man, whom I must now compel
 To keep his word with me. I came arrayed
 In tempest, and although my power could well
 Bridle the forest winds in their career,
 For other causes I forbore to soothe 155
 Their fury to Favonian gentleness;
 I could and would not; (thus I wake in him
 A love of magic art). Let not this tempest,
 Nor the succeeding calm excite thy wonder;
 For by my art the sun would turn as pale 160
 As his weak sister with unwonted fear;
 And in my wisdom are the orbs of Heaven
 Written as in a record; I have pierced
 The flaming circles of their wondrous spheres
 And know them as thou knowest every corner 165
 Of this dim spot. Let it not seem to thee
 That I boast vainly; wouldst thou that I work
 A charm over this waste and savage wood,
 This Babylon of crags and agèd trees,
 Filling its leafy coverts with a horror 170
 Thrilling and strange? I am the friendless guest
 Of these wild oaks and pines—and as from thee
 I have received the hospitality
 Of this rude place, I offer thee the fruit
 Of years of toil in recompense; whate'er 175
 Thy wildest dream presented to thy thought
 As object of desire, that shall be thine.

And thenceforth shall so firm an amity
 'Twixt thee and me be, that neither Fortune,

146 wide glassy wildernesses *Rossetti*.
 fiercest *cj. Rossetti*.

150 Seeking forever *cj. Forman*.

154 forest]

The monstrous phantom which pursues success,
 That careful miser, that free prodigal,
 Who ever alternates, with changeful hand,
 Evil and good, reproach and fame; nor Time,
 That lodestar of the ages, to whose beam
 The wingèd years speed o'er the intervals
 Of their unequal revolutions; nor
 Heaven itself, whose beautiful bright stars
 Rule and adorn the world, can ever make
 The least division between thee and me,
 Since now I find a refuge in thy favour.

SCENE III.—*The DAEMON tempts JUSTINA, who is a Christian.*

Daemon.

Abyss of Hell! I call on thee,
 Thou wild misrule of thine own anarchy!
 From thy prison-house set free
 The spirits of voluptuous death,
 That with their mighty breath
 They may destroy a world of virgin thoughts;
 Let her chaste mind with fancies thick as motes
 Be peopled from thy shadowy deep,
 Till her guiltless fantasy
 Full to overflowing be!
 And with sweetest harmony,
 Let birds, and flowers, and leaves, and all things move
 To love, only to love.
 Let nothing meet her eyes
 But signs of Love's soft victories;
 Let nothing meet her ear
 But sounds of Love's sweet sorrow,
 So that from faith no succour she may borrow,
 But, guided by my spirit blind
 And in a magic snare entwined,
 She may now seek Cyprian.
 Begin, while I in silence bind
 My voice, when thy sweet song thou hast began.

A Voice (within).

What is the glory far above
 All else in human life?

All.

Love! love!

[*While these words are sung, the DAEMON goes out at one door, and JUSTINA enters at another.*]

The First Voice.

There is no form in which the fire
 Of love its traces has impressed not.
 Man lives far more in love's desire

18 she may] may she 1824.

Than by life's breath, soon possessed not.
 If all that lives must love or die,
 All shapes on earth, or sea, or sky,
 With one consent to Heaven cry
 That the glory far above
 All else in life is—

All.

Love! oh, Love!

Justina.

Thou melancholy Thought which art
 So flattering and so sweet, to thee
 When did I give the liberty

Thus to afflict my heart?

What is the cause of this new Power

Which doth my fevered being move,
 Momently raging more and more?

What subtle Pain is kindled now

Which from my heart doth overflow

Into my senses?—

All.

Love! oh, Love!

Justina.

'Tis that enamoured Nightingale

Who gives me the reply;

He ever tells the same soft tale

Of passion and of constancy

To his mate, who rapt and fond,

Listening sits, a bough beyond.

Be silent, Nightingale—no more

Make me think, in hearing thee

Thus tenderly thy love deplore,

If a bird can feel his so,

What a man would feel for me.

And, voluptuous Vine, O thou

Who seekest most when least pursuing,—

To the trunk thou interlacest

Art the verdure which embracest,

And the weight which is its ruin,—

No more, with green embraces, Vine,

Make me think on what thou lovest,—

For whilst thus thy boughs entwine,

I fear lest thou shouldst teach me, sophist,

How arms might be entangled too.

Light-enchanted Sunflower, thou

Who gazest ever true and tender

On the sun's revolving splendour!

Follow not his faithless glance

36 flattering *Boscombe MS.*; fluttering 1824. 58 To] Who to *cj. Rossetti.*
 thus *Rossetti, Forman, Dowden*; whilst thou thus 1824.

With thy faded countenance,
 Nor teach my beating heart to fear,
 If leaves can mourn without a tear,
 How eyes must weep! O Nightingale,
 Cease from thy enamoured tale,—
 Leafy Vine, unwreath thy bower,
 Restless Sunflower, cease to move,—
 Or tell me all, what poisonous Power
 Ye use against me—

All.

Love! Love! Love!

Justina. It cannot be!—Whom have I ever loved?
 Trophies of my oblivion and disdain,
 Floro and Lelio did I not reject?
 And Cyprian?— [*She becomes troubled at the name of Cyprian.*]

Did I not requite him
 With such severity, that he has fled
 Where none has ever heard of him again?—
 Alas! I now begin to fear that this
 May be the occasion whence desire grows bold,
 As if there were no danger. From the moment
 That I pronounced to my own listening heart,
 ‘Cyprian is absent!’—O me miserable!
 I know not what I feel! [*More calmly.*] It must be pity
 To think that such a man, whom all the world
 Admired, should be forgot by all the world,
 And I the cause. [*She again becomes troubled.*]

And yet if it were pity,
 Floro and Lelio might have equal share,
 For they are both imprisoned for my sake.
 (*Calmly.*) Alas! what reasonings are these? it is
 Enough I pity him, and that, in vain,
 Without this ceremonious subtlety.
 And, woe is me! I know not where to find him now,
 Even should I seek him through this wide world.

Enter DAEMON.

Daemon. Follow, and I will lead thee where he is.

Justina. And who art thou, who hast found entrance hither,
 Into my chamber through the doors and locks?
 Art thou a monstrous shadow which my madness
 Has formed in the idle air?

Daemon. No. I am one
 Called by the Thought which tyrannizes thee
 From his eternal dwelling; who this day
 Is pledged to bear thee unto Cyprian.

Justina. So shall thy promise fail. This agony
 Of passion which afflicts my heart and soul
 May sweep imagination in its storm;

89 me miserable] miserable me *edd.* 1839.

The will is firm.

Daemon. Already half is done
In the imagination of an act.

The sin incurred, the pleasure then remains;
Let not the will stop half-way on the road.

115

Justina. I will not be discouraged, nor despair,
Although I thought it, and although 'tis true
That thought is but a prelude to the deed:—
Thought is not in my power, but action is:
I will not move my foot to follow thee.

120

Daemon. But a far mightier wisdom than thine own
Exerts itself within thee, with such power
Compelling thee to that which it inclines
That it shall force thy step; how wilt thou then
Resist, *Justina*?

Justina. By my free-will.

Daemon. I
Must force thy will.

125

Justina. It is invincible;
It were not free if thou hadst power upon it.

[*He draws, but cannot move her.*]

Daemon. Come, where a pleasure waits thee.

Justina. It were bought
Too dear.

Daemon. 'Twill soothe thy heart to softest peace.

Justina. 'Tis dread captivity.

Daemon. 'Tis joy, 'tis glory.

130

Justina. 'Tis shame, 'tis torment, 'tis despair.

Daemon. But how

Canst thou defend thyself from that or me,
If my power drags thee onward?

Justina. My defence
Consists in God.

[*He vainly endeavours to force her, and at last releases her.*]

Daemon. Woman, thou hast subdued me,
Only by not owning thyself subdued.

135

But since thou thus findest defence in God,

I will assume a feignèd form, and thus

Make thee a victim of my baffled rage.

For I will mask a spirit in thy form

Who will betray thy name to infamy,

140

And doubly shall I triumph in thy loss,

First by dishonouring thee, and then by turning

False pleasure to true ignominy.

[*Exit.*]

Justina. I

Appeal to Heaven against thee; so that Heaven

May scatter thy delusions, and the blot

145

Upon my fame vanish in idle thought,

Even as flame dies in the envious air,

123 inclines] inclines to *cj. Rossetti.*

And as the floweret wanes at morning frost;
 And thou shouldst never—But, alas! to whom
 Do I still speak?—Did not a man but now
 Stand here before me?—No, I am alone, 150
 And yet I saw him. Is he gone so quickly?
 Or can the heated mind engender shapes
 From its own fear? Some terrible and strange
 Peril is near. Lisander! father! lord!
 Livia!— 155

Enter LISANDER and LIVIA.

Lisander. Oh, my daughter! What?

Livia. What!

Justina. Saw you

A man go forth from my apartment now?—
 I scarce contain myself!

Lisander. A man here!

Justina. Have you not seen him?

Livia. No, Lady.

Justina. I saw him.

Lisander. 'Tis impossible; the doors 160
 Which led to this apartment were all locked.

Livia (aside). I daresay it was Moscon whom she saw,
 For he was locked up in my room.

Lisander. It must
 Have been some image of thy fantasy.

Such melancholy as thou feedest is 165
 Skilful in forming such in the vain air
 Out of the motes and atoms of the day.

Livia. My master's in the right.

Justina. Oh, would it were
 Delusion; but I fear some greater ill.

I feel as if out of my bleeding bosom 170
 My heart was torn in fragments; ay,

Some mortal spell is wrought against my frame;

So potent was the charm that, had not God

Shielded my humble innocence from wrong,
 I should have sought my sorrow and my shame 175

With willing steps.—Livia, quick, bring my cloak,

For I must seek refuge from these extremes

Even in the temple of the highest God

Where secretly the faithful worship.

Livia. Here.

Justina (putting on her cloak). In this, as in a shroud of snow, may I 180
 Quench the consuming fire in which I burn,
 Wasting away!

Lisander. And I will go with thee.

Livia. When I once see them safe out of the house
 I shall breathe freely.

Justina. So do I confide
In thy just favour, Heaven!
Lisander. Let us go.
Justina. Thine is the cause, great God! turn for my sake,
And for Thine own, mercifully to me!

185

STANZAS FROM CALDERON'S CISMA DE INGLATERRA

Translated by Medwin and corrected by Shelley.

[Published by Medwin, *Life of Shelley*, 1847, with Shelley's corrections in italics.]

I

HAST thou not seen, officious with delight,
Move through the illumined air about the flower
The Bee, that fears to drink its purple light,
Lest danger lurk within that Rose's bower?
Hast thou not marked the moth's enamoured flight
About the Taper's flame at evening hour,
Till kindle in that monumental fire
His sunflower wings their own funereal pyre?

5

II

My heart, its wishes trembling to unfold,
Thus round the Rose and Taper hovering came,
And Passion's slave, Distrust, in ashes cold,
Smothered awhile, but could not quench the flame,—
Till Love, that grows by disappointment bold,
And Opportunity, had conquered Shame;
And like the Bee and Moth, in act to close,
I burned my wings, and settled on the Rose.

10

15

SCENES FROM THE FAUST OF GOETHE

[Published in part (Scene II) in *The Liberal*, No. I, 1822; in full, by Mrs. Shelley, *Posthumous Poems*, 1824.]

SCENE I.—PROLOGUE IN HEAVEN. *The LORD and the HOST of HEAVEN.*

Enter three ARCHANGELS.

Raphael.

THE sun makes music as of old
Amid the rival spheres of Heaven,
On its predestined circle rolled
With thunder speed: the Angels even
Draw strength from gazing on its glance,
Though none its meaning fathom may:—
The world's unwithered countenance
Is bright as at Creation's day.

5

Gabriel.

And swift and swift, with rapid lightness,
The adorned Earth spins silently,

10

Alternating Elysian brightness
 With deep and dreadful night ; the sea
 Foams in broad billows from the deep
 Up to the rocks, and rocks and Ocean,
 Onward, with spheres which never sleep,
 Are hurried in eternal motion. 15

Michael.

And tempests in contention roar
 From land to sea, from sea to land ;
 And, raging, weave a chain of power,
 Which girds the earth, as with a band.— 20
 A flashing desolation there,
 Flames before the thunder's way ;
 But Thy servants, Lord, revere
 The gentle changes of Thy day.

Chorus of the Three.

The Angels draw strength from Thy glance, 25
 Though no one comprehend Thee may ;—
 Thy world's unwithered countenance
 Is bright as on Creation's day¹.

¹ *Raphael.* The sun sounds, according to ancient custom,
 In the song of emulation of his brother-spheres.
 And its fore-written circle
 Fulfils with a step of thunder.
 Its countenance gives the Angels strength
 Though no one can fathom it.
 The incredible high works
 Are excellent as at the first day.

Gabriel. And swift, and inconceivably swift
 The adornment of earth winds itself round,
 And exchanges Paradise-clearness
 With deep dreadful night.
 The sea foams in broad waves
 From its deep bottom, up to the rocks,
 And rocks and sea are torn on together
 In the eternal swift course of the spheres.

Michael. And storms roar in emulation
 From sea to land, from land to sea,
 And make, raging, a chain
 Of deepest operation round about.
 There flames a flashing destruction
 Before the path of the thunderbolt.
 But Thy servants, Lord, revere
 The gentle alternations of Thy day.

Chorus. Thy countenance gives the Angels strength,
 Though none can comprehend Thee:
 And all Thy lofty works
 Are excellent as at the first day.

Such is a literal translation of this astonishing chorus ; it is impossible to represent in another language the melody of the versification ; even the volatile strength and delicacy of the ideas escape in the crucible of translation, and the reader is surprised to find a *caput mortuum*.—

[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

Enter MEPHISTOPHELES.

Mephistopheles. As thou, O Lord, once more art kind enough
 To interest Thyself in our affairs, 30
 And ask, 'How goes it with you there below?'
 And as indulgently at other times
 Thou tookest not my visits in ill part,
 Thou seest me here once more among Thy household.
 Though I should scandalize this company, 35
 You will excuse me if I do not talk
 In the high style which they think fashionable;
 My pathos certainly would make You laugh too,
 Had You not long since given over laughing.
 Nothing know I to say of suns and worlds; 40
 I observe only how men plague themselves;—
 The little god o' the world keeps the same stamp,
 As wonderful as on creation's day:—
 A little better would he live, hadst Thou
 Not given him a glimpse of Heaven's light 45
 Which he calls reason, and employs it only
 To live more beastlily than any beast.
 With reverence to Your Lordship be it spoken,
 He's like one of those long-legged grasshoppers,
 Who flits and jumps about, and sings for ever 50
 The same old song i' the grass. There let him lie,
 Burying his nose in every heap of dung.

The Lord. Have you no more to say? Do you come here
 Always to scold, and cavil, and complain?
 Seems nothing ever right to you on earth? 55

Mephistopheles. No, Lord! I find all there, as ever, bad at best.
 Even I am sorry for man's days of sorrow;
 I could myself almost give up the pleasure
 Of plaguing the poor things.

The Lord. Knowest thou Faust?

Mephistopheles. The Doctor?

The Lord. Ay; My servant Faust.

Mephistopheles. In truth 60

He serves You in a fashion quite his own;
 And the fool's meat and drink are not of earth.
 His aspirations bear him on so far
 That he is half aware of his own folly,
 For he demands from Heaven its fairest star, 65
 And from the earth the highest joy it bears,
 Yet all things far, and all things near, are vain
 To calm the deep emotions of his breast.

The Lord. Though he now serves Me in a cloud of error,
 I will soon lead him forth to the clear day. 70
 When trees look green, full well the gardener knows
 That fruits and blooms will deck the coming year.

38 certainly would *edd.* 1839; would certainly 1824.

47 beastlily 1824; beastily *edd.* 1839.

Mephistopheles. What will You bet?—now I am sure of winning—
Only, observe You give me full permission
To lead him softly on my path.

The Lord. As long 75
As he shall live upon the earth, so long
Is nothing unto thee forbidden—Man
Must err till he has ceased to struggle.

Mephistopheles. Thanks,
And that is all I ask; for willingly
I never make acquaintance with the dead. 80
The full fresh cheeks of youth are food for me,
And if a corpse knocks, I am not at home.
For I am like a cat—I like to play
A little with the mouse before I eat it.

The Lord. Well, well! it is permitted thee. Draw thou 85
His spirit from its springs; as thou find'st power,
Seize him and lead him on thy downward path;
And stand ashamed when failure teaches thee
That a good man, even in his darkest longings,
Is well aware of the right way.

Mephistopheles. Well and good. 90
I am not in much doubt about my bet,
And if I lose, then 'tis Your turn to crow;
Enjoy Your triumph then with a full breast.
Ay; dust shall he devour, and that with pleasure,
Like my old paramour, the famous Snake. 95

The Lord. Pray come here when it suits you; for I never
Had much dislike for people of your sort.
And, among all the Spirits who rebelled,
The knave was ever the least tedious to Me.
The active spirit of man soon sleeps, and soon 100
He seeks unbroken quiet; therefore I
Have given him the Devil for a companion,
Who may provoke him to some sort of work,
And must create forever.—But ye, pure
Children of God, enjoy eternal beauty;— 105
Let that which ever operates and lives
Clasp you within the limits of its love;
And seize with sweet and melancholy thoughts
The floating phantoms of its loveliness.

[*Heaven closes; the Archangels exeunt.*

Mephistopheles. From time to time I visit the old fellow, 110
And I take care to keep on good terms with Him.
Civil enough is the same God Almighty,
To talk so freely with the Devil himself.

SCENE II.—MAY-DAY NIGHT. *The Hartz Mountain, a desolate Country.*
FAUST, MEPHISTOPHELES.

Mephistopheles. Would you not like a broomstick? As for me
I wish I had a good stout ram to ride;

For we are still far from the appointed place.

Faust. This knotted staff is help enough for me,
 Whilst I feel fresh upon my legs. What good
 Is there in making short a pleasant way?
 To creep along the labyrinths of the vales,
 And climb those rocks, where ever-babbling springs,
 Precipitate themselves in waterfalls,
 Is the true sport that seasons such a path.
 Already Spring kindles the birchen spray,
 And the hoar pines already feel her breath:
 Shall she not work also within our limbs?

Mephistopheles. Nothing of such an influence do I feel.
 My body is all wintry, and I wish
 The flowers upon our path were frost and snow.
 But see how melancholy rises now,
 Dimly uplifting her belated beam,
 The blank unwelcome round of the red moon,
 And gives so bad a light, that every step
 One stumbles 'gainst some crag. With your permission,
 I'll call on Ignis-fatuus to our aid:
 I see one yonder burning jollily.
 Halloo, my friend! may I request that you
 Would favour us with your bright company?
 Why should you blaze away there to no purpose?
 Pray be so good as light us up this way.

Ignis-fatuus. With reverence be it spoken, I will try
 To overcome the lightness of my nature;
 Our course, you know, is generally zigzag.

Mephistopheles. Ha, ha! your worship thinks you have to deal
 With men. Go straight on, in the Devil's name,
 Or I shall puff your flickering life out.

Ignis-fatuus. Well,
 I see you are the master of the house;
 I will accommodate myself to you.
 Only consider that to-night this mountain
 Is all enchanted, and if Jack-a-lantern
 Shows you his way, though you should miss your own,
 You ought not to be too exact with him.

FAUST, MEPHISTOPHELES, and IGNIS-FATUUS, in alternate Chorus.

The limits of the sphere of dream,
 'The bounds of true and false, are past.
 Lead us on, thou wandering Gleam,
 Lead us onward, far and fast,
 To the wide, the desert waste.

But see, how swift advance and shift
 Trees behind trees, row by row,—
 How, clift by clift, rocks bend and lift
 Their frowning foreheads as we go.

33 shall puff 1824; will blow 1822.

48 frowning] fawning 1822.

The giant-snouted crags, ho ! ho !
 How they snort, and how they blow ! 50
 Through the mossy sods and stones,
 Stream and streamlet hurry down—
 A rushing throng ! A sound of song
 Beneath the vault of Heaven is blown !
 Sweet notes of love, the speaking tones 55
 Of this bright day, sent down to say
 That Paradise on Earth is known,
 Resound around, beneath, above.
 All we hope and all we love
 Finds a voice in this blithe strain, 60
 Which wakens hill and wood and rill,
 And vibrates far o'er field and vale,
 And which Echo, like the tale
 Of old times, repeats again.
 To-whoo ! to-whoo ! near, nearer now 65
 The sound of song, the rushing throng !
 Are the screech, the lapwing, and the jay,
 All awake as if 'twere day ?
 See, with long legs and belly wide,
 A salamander in the brake ! 70
 Every root is like a snake,
 And along the loose hillside,
 With strange contortions through the night,
 Curls, to seize or to affright ;
 And, animated, strong, and many, 75
 They dart forth polypus-antennae,
 To blister with their poison spume
 The wanderer. Through the dazzling gloom
 The many-coloured mice, that thread
 The dewy turf beneath our tread, 80
 In troops each other's motions cross,
 Through the heath and through the moss ;
 And, in legions intertangled,
 The fire-flies flit, and swarm, and throng,
 Till all the mountain depths are spangled. 85
 Tell me, shall we go or stay ?
 Shall we onward ? Come along :
 Everything around is swept
 Forward, onward, far away !
 Trees and masses intercept 90
 The sight, and wisps on every side
 Are puffed up and multiplied.

Mephistopheles. Now vigorously seize my skirt, and gain
 This pinnacle of isolated crag.

One may observe with wonder from this point,
How Mammon glows among the mountains. 95

Faust.

Ay—

And strangely through the solid depth below
A melancholy light, like the red dawn,
Shoots from the lowest gorge of the abyss
Of mountains, lightning hitherward: there rise 100
Pillars of smoke, here clouds float gently by;
Here the light burns soft as the enkindled air,
Or the illumined dust of golden flowers;
And now it glides like tender colours spreading;
And now bursts forth in fountains from the earth; 105
And now it winds, one torrent of broad light,
Through the far valley with a hundred veins;
And now once more within that narrow corner
Masses itself into intensest splendour.
And near us, see, sparks spring out of the ground, 110
Like golden sand scattered upon the darkness;
The pinnacles of that black wall of mountains
That hems us in are kindled.

Mephistopheles.

Rare: in faith!

Does not Sir Mammon gloriously illuminate
His palace for this festival?—it is 115
A pleasure which you had not known before.
I spy the boisterous guests already.

Faust.

How

The children of the wind rage in the air!
With what fierce strokes they fall upon my neck!

Mephistopheles.

Cling tightly to the old ribs of the crag. 120

Beware! for if with them thou warrest

In their fierce flight towards the wilderness,
Their breath will sweep thee into dust, and drag
Thy body to a grave in the abyss. 125

A cloud thickens the night.

Hark! how the tempest crashes through the forest!

The owls fly out in strange affright;

The columns of the evergreen palaces

Are split and shattered;

The roots creak, and stretch, and groan; 130

And ruinously overthrown,

The trunks are crushed and shattered

By the fierce blast's unconquerable stress.

Over each other crack and crash they all

In terrible and intertangled fall; 135

And through the ruins of the shaken mountain

The airs hiss and howl—

It is not the voice of the fountain,

117 How 1824; Now 1822.

132 shattered] scattered *Rossetti*.

Nor the wolf in his midnight prowl.

Dost thou not hear?

140

Strange accents are ringing

Aloft, afar, anear?

The witches are singing!

The torrent of a raging wizard song

Streams the whole mountain along.

145

Chorus of Witches.

The stubble is yellow, the corn is green,

Now to the Brocken the witches go;

The mighty multitude here may be seen

Gathering, wizard and witch, below.

Sir Urian is sitting aloft in the air;

150

Hey over stock! and hey over stone!

'Twixt witches and incubi, what shall be done?

Tell it who dare! tell it who dare!

A Voice.

Upon a sow-swine, whose farrows were nine,

Old Baubo rideth alone.

155

Chorus.

Honour her, to whom honour is due,

Old mother Baubo, honour to you!

An able sow, with old Baubo upon her,

Is worthy of glory, and worthy of honour!

The legion of witches is coming behind,

160

Darkening the night, and outspeeding the wind—

A Voice.

Which way comest thou?

A Voice.

Over Ilsenstein;

The owl was awake in the white moonshine;

I saw her at rest in her downy nest,

And she stared at me with her broad, bright eyne.

165

Voices.

And you may now as well take your course on to Hell,

Since you ride by so fast on the headlong blast.

A Voice.

She dropped poison upon me as I passed.

Here are the wounds——

Chorus of Witches.

Come away! come along!

The way is wide, the way is long,

170

But what is that for a Bedlam throng?
Stick with the prong, and scratch with the broom.
The child in the cradle lies strangled at home,
And the mother is clapping her hands.—

Semichorus of Wizards I.

We glide in

Like snails when the women are all away;
And from a house once given over to sin
Woman has a thousand steps to stray.

Semichorus II.

A thousand steps must a woman take,
Where a man but a single spring will make.

Voices above.

Come with us, come with us, from Felsensee.

Voices below.

With what joy would we fly through the upper sky!
We are washed, we are 'nointed, stark naked are we;
But our toil and our pain are forever in vain.

Both Choruses.

The wind is still, the stars are fled,
The melancholy moon is dead;
The magic notes, like spark on spark,
Drizzle, whistling through the dark.

Come away!

Voices below.

Stay, Oh, stay!

Voices above.

Out of the crannies of the rocks
Who calls?

Voices below.

Oh, let me join your flocks!
I, three hundred years have striven
To catch your skirt and mount to Heaven,—
And still in vain. Oh, might I be
With company akin to me!

Both Choruses.

Some on a ram and some on a prong,
On poles and on broomsticks we flutter along;
Forlorn is the wight who can rise not to-night.

A Half-Witch below.

I have been tripping this many an hour:
Are the others already so far before?

180 Felsensee 1862 (*Relics of Shelley*, p. 96); Felumee 1822; Felunsee *edd.* 1824, 1839.
are *edd.* 1839; is 1822, 1824.

No quiet at home, and no peace abroad !
And less methinks is found by the road.

Chorus of Witches.

Come onward, away ! aroint thee, aroint !
A witch to be strong must anoint—anoint—
Then every trough will be boat enough ;
With a rag for a sail we can sweep through the sky,
Who flies not to-night, when means he to fly ?

205

Both Choruses.

We cling to the skirt, and we strike on the ground ;
Witch-legions thicken around and around ;
Wizard-swarms cover the heath all over.

[*They descend.*

Mephistopheles.

What thronging, dashing, raging, rustling ;
What whispering, babbling, hissing, bustling ;
What glimmering, spurting, stinking, burning,
As Heaven and Earth were overturning.
There is a true witch element about us ;
Take hold on me, or we shall be divided :—
Where are you ?

211

215

Faust (from a distance). Here !

Mephistopheles.

What !

I must exert my authority in the house.
Place for young Voland ! pray make way, good people.
Take hold on me, doctor, and with one step
Let us escape from this unpleasant crowd :
They are too mad for people of my sort.
Just there shines a peculiar kind of light—
Something attracts me in those bushes. Come
This way : we shall slip down there in a minute.

220

225

Faust. Spirit of Contradiction ! Well, lead on—
'Twere a wise feat indeed to wander out
Into the Brocken upon May-day night,
And then to isolate oneself in scorn,
Disgusted with the humours of the time.

230

Mephistopheles. See yonder, round a many-coloured flame
A merry club is huddled altogether :
Even with such little people as sit there
One would not be alone.

Faust. Would that I were
Up yonder in the glow and whirling smoke,
Where the blind million rush impetuously
To meet the evil ones ; there might I solve
Many a riddle that torments me !

235

Mephistopheles. Yet
Many a riddle there is tied anew
Inextricably. Let the great world rage !

240

We will stay here safe in the quiet dwellings.
 'Tis an old custom. Men have ever built
 Their own small world in the great world of all.
 I see young witches naked there, and old ones
 Wisely attired with greater decency. 245
 Be guided now by me, and you shall buy
 A pound of pleasure with a dram of trouble.
 I hear them tune their instruments—one must
 Get used to this damned scraping. Come, I'll lead you
 Among them; and what there you do and see, 250
 As a fresh compact 'twixt us two shall be.
 How say you now? this space is wide enough—
 Look forth, you cannot see the end of it—
 An hundred bonfires burn in rows, and they
 Who throng around them seem innumerable: 255
 Dancing and drinking, jabbering, making love,
 And cooking, are at work. Now tell me, friend,
 What is there better in the world than this?
Faust. In introducing us, do you assume
 The character of Wizard or of Devil? 260
Mephistopheles. In truth, I generally go about
 In strict incognito; and yet one likes
 To wear one's orders upon gala days.
 I have no ribbon at my knee; but here
 At home, the cloven foot is honourable. 265
 See you that snail there?—she comes creeping up,
 And with her feeling eyes hath smelt out something.
 I could not, if I would, mask myself here.
 Come now, we'll go about from fire to fire:
 I'll be the Pimp, and you shall be the Lover. 270
 [*To some old Women, who are sitting round a heap of glimmering coals.*
 Old gentlewomen, what do you do out here?
 You ought to be with the young rioters
 Right in the thickest of the revelry—
 But every one is best content at home.

General.

Who dare confide in right or a just claim? 275
 So much as I had done for them! and now—
 With women and the people 'tis the same,
 Youth will stand foremost ever,—age may go
 To the dark grave unhonoured.

Minister.

Nowadays
 People assert their rights: they go too far;
 But as for me, the good old times I praise; 280
 Then we were all in all—'twas something worth

254 An 1824; A edd. 1839.
 night 1822.

264 my wanting, 1822.

275 right edd. 1824, 1839;

One's while to be in place and wear a star;
That was indeed the golden age on earth.

Parvenu.

We too are active, and we did and do 285
What we ought not, perhaps; and yet we now
Will seize, whilst all things are whirled round and round,
A spoke of Fortune's wheel, and keep our ground.

Author.

Who now can taste a treatise of deep sense
And ponderous volume? 'tis impertinence 290
To write what none will read, therefore will I
To please the young and thoughtless people try.

Mephistopheles (*who at once appears to have grown very old*). I find the
people ripe for the last day,
Since I last came up to the wizard mountain;
And as my little cask runs turbid now, 295
So is the world drained to the dregs.

Pedlar-witch.

Look here,

Gentlemen; do not hurry on so fast;
And lose the chance of a good pennyworth.
I have a pack full of the choicest wares
Of every sort, and yet in all my bundle 300
Is nothing like what may be found on earth;
Nothing that in a moment will make rich
Men and the world with fine malicious mischief—
There is no dagger drunk with blood; no bowl
From which consuming poison may be drained 305
By innocent and healthy lips; no jewel,
The price of an abandoned maiden's shame;
No sword which cuts the bond it cannot loose,
Or stabs the wearer's enemy in the back;
No——

Mephistopheles. Gossip, you know little of these times. 310
What has been, has been; what is done, is past,
They shape themselves into the innovations
They breed, and innovation drags us with it.
The torrent of the crowd sweeps over us:
You think to impel, and are yourself impelled. 315

Faust. What is that yonder?

Mephistopheles.

Mark her well. It is

Lilith.

Faust. Who?

Mephistopheles. Lilith, the first wife of Adam.
Beware of her fair hair, for she excels
All women in the magic of her locks;
And when she winds them round a young man's neck, 320
She will not ever set him free again.

285 *Parvenu*: (Note) A sort of fundholder 1822, *edd.* 1824, 1839.
wonderous 1822.

290 ponderous 1824;

Faust.

There sit a girl and an old woman—they
Seem to be tired with pleasure and with play.

Mephistopheles.

There is no rest to-night for any one:

When one dance ends another is begun;

325

Come, let us to it. We shall have rare fun.

[*FAUST dances and sings with a girl, and MEPHISTOPHELES with an old Woman.*

Faust.

I had once a lovely dream

In which I saw an apple-tree,

Where two fair apples with their gleam

To climb and taste attracted me.

330

The Girl.

She with apples you desired

From Paradise came long ago:

With you I feel that if required,

Such still within my garden grow.

Procto-Phantasmist. What is this cursèd multitude about?

335

Have we not long since proved to demonstration

That ghosts move not on ordinary feet?

But these are dancing just like men and women.

The Girl. What does he want then at our ball?

Faust.

Oh! he

Is far above us all in his conceit:

340

Whilst we enjoy, he reasons of enjoyment;

And any step which in our dance we tread,

If it be left out of his reckoning,

Is not to be considered as a step.

There are few things that scandalize him not:

345

And when you whirl round in the circle now,

As he went round the wheel in his old mill,

He says that you go wrong in all respects,

Especially if you congratulate him

Upon the strength of the resemblance.

Procto-Phantasmist.

Fly!

350

Vanish! Unheard-of impudence! What, still there!

In this enlightened age too, since you have been

Proved not to exist!—But this infernal brood

Will hear no reason and endure no rule.

Are we so wise, and is the *pond* still haunted?

355

How long have I been sweeping out this rubbish

Of superstition, and the world will not

Come clean with all my pains!—it is a case

Unheard of!

327-334 *So Boscombe MS. (Westminster Review, July, 1870); wanting, 1822, 1824, 1839.* 335
Procto-Phantasmist] Brocto-Phantasmist edd. 1824, 1839. 355 pond wanting in Boscombe MS.

The Girl. Then leave off teasing us so.

Procto-Phantasmist. I tell you, spirits, to your faces now,
That I should not regret this despotism
Of spirits, but that mine can wield it not.
To-night I shall make poor work of it,
Yet I will take a round with you, and hope
Before my last step in the living dance
To beat the poet and the devil together. 365

Mephistopheles. At last he will sit down in some foul puddle;
That is his way of solacing himself;
Until some leech, diverted with his gravity,
Cures him of spirits and the spirit together. 370

[*To FAUST, who has seceded from the dance.*

Why do you let that fair girl pass from you,
Who sung so sweetly to you in the dance?

Faust. A red mouse in the middle of her singing
Sprung from her mouth.

Mephistopheles. That was all right, my friend:
Be it enough that the mouse was not gray.
Do not disturb your hour of happiness
With close consideration of such trifles. 375

Faust. Then saw I——

Mephistopheles. What?

Faust. Seest thou not a pale,
Fair girl, standing alone, far, far away?
She drags herself now forward with slow steps,
And seems as if she moved with shackled feet: 380
I cannot overcome the thought that she
Is like poor Margaret.

Mephistopheles. Let it be—pass on—
No good can come of it—it is not well
To meet it—it is an enchanted phantom,
A lifeless idol; with its numbing look, 385
It freezes up the blood of man; and they
Who meet its ghastly stare are turned to stone,
Like those who saw Medusa.

Faust. Oh, too true!
Her eyes are like the eyes of a fresh corpse
Which no beloved hand has closed, alas!
That is the breast which Margaret yielded to me—
Those are the lovely limbs which I enjoyed! 390

Mephistopheles. It is all magic, poor deluded fool!
She looks to every one like his first love. 395

Faust. Oh, what delight! what woe! I cannot turn
My looks from her sweet piteous countenance,
How strangely does a single blood-red line,
Not broader than the sharp edge of a knife,
Adorn her lovely neck!

Mephistopheles. Ay, she can carry 400

Her head under her arm upon occasion;
 Perseus has cut it off for her. These pleasures
 End in delusion.—Gain this rising ground,
 It is as airy here as in a . . .
 And if I am not mightily deceived,
 I see a theatre.—What may this mean?

405

Attendant. Quite a new piece, the last of seven, for 'tis
 The custom now to represent that number.
 'Tis written by a Dilettante, and
 The actors who perform are Dilettanti;
 Excuse me, gentlemen; but I must vanish.
 I am a Dilettante curtain-lifter.

410

JUVENILIA

QUEEN MAB

A PHILOSOPHICAL POEM, WITH NOTES

[An edition (250 copies) of *Queen Mab* was printed at London in the summer of 1813 by Shelley himself, whose name, as author and printer, appears on the title-page (see *Bibliographical List*). Of this edition about seventy copies were privately distributed. Sections i, ii, viii, and ix were afterwards rehandled, and the intermediate sections here and there revised and altered; and of this new text sections i and ii were published by Shelley in the *Alastor* volume of 1816, under the title, *The Daemon of the World*. The remainder lay unpublished till 1876, when sections viii and ix were printed by Mr. H. Buxton Forman, C.B., from a printed copy of *Queen Mab* with Shelley's MS. corrections. See *The Shelley Library*, pp. 36–44, for a description of this copy, which is in Mr. Forman's possession. Sources of the text are (1) the *editio princeps* of 1813; (2) text (with some omissions) in the *Poetical Works* of 1839, edited by Mrs. Shelley; (3) text (one line only wanting) in the 2nd edition of the *P. W.*, 1839 (same editor).

Queen Mab was probably written during the year 1812—it is first heard of at Lynmouth, August 18, 1812 (*Shelley Memorials*, p. 39)—but the text may be assumed to include earlier material.]

ECRASEZ L'INFAME!—*Correspondance de Voltaire.*

Avia Pieridum peragro loca, nullius ante
 Trita solo; juvat integros accedere fonteis;
 Atque haurire: juvatque novos decerpere flores.

Unde prius nulli velarint tempora musae.
 Primum quod magnis doceo de rebus; et arctis
 Religionum animos nodis exsolvere pergo.—*Lucret. lib. iv.*

Δος που στῶ, καὶ κοσμον κινήσω.—*Archimedes.*

TO HARRIET*****

WHOSE is the love that gleaming
 through the world,
 Wards off the poisonous arrow of its
 scorn?

Whose is the warm and partial praise,
 Virtue's most sweet reward?

Beneath whose looks did my reviving
 soul
 Riper in truth and virtuous daring
 grow?

Whose eyes have I gazed fondly on,
 And loved mankind the more?

HARRIET! on thine:—thou wert my
 purer mind;
 Thou wert the inspiration of my
 song; 10
 Thine are these early wilding flowers,
 Though garlanded by me.
 Then press into thy breast this pledge
 of love;
 And know, though time may change
 and years may roll,
 Each floweret gathered in my heart
 It consecrates to thine. 16

QUEEN MAB

I

How wonderful is Death,
 Death and his brother Sleep!
 One, pale as yonder waning moon
 With lips of lurid blue;
 The other, rosy as the morn 5
 When throned on ocean's wave
 It blushes o'er the world:
 Yet both so passing wonderful!

Hath then the gloomy Power
 Whose reign is in the tainted sepul-
 chres 10
 Seized on her sinless soul?
 Must then that peerless form
 Which love and admiration cannot
 view
 Without a beating heart, those azure
 veins
 Which steal like streams along a field
 of snow, 15
 That lovely outline, which is fair
 As breathing marble, perish?
 Must putrefaction's breath
 Leave nothing of this heavenly sight
 But loathsomeness and ruin? 20
 Spare nothing but a gloomy theme,
 On which the lightest heart might
 moralize?
 Or is it only a sweet slumber
 Stealing o'er sensation,
 Which the breath of roseate morn-
 ing 25
 Chaseth into darkness?
 Will Ianthe wake again,

And give that faithful bosom joy
 Whose sleepless spirit waits to catch
 Light, life and rapture from her
 smile? 30

Yes! she will wake again,
 Although her glowing limbs are
 motionless,
 And silent those sweet lips,
 Once breathing eloquence,
 That might have soothed a tiger's
 rage, 35
 Or thawed the cold heart of a con-
 queror.

Her dewy eyes are closed,
 And on their lids, whose texture fine
 Scarce hides the dark blue orbs
 beneath,

The baby Sleep is pillowed: 40
 Her golden tresses shade
 The bosom's stainless pride,
 Curling like tendrils of the parasite
 Around a marble column.

Hark! whence that rushing sound?
 'Tis like the wondrous strain 46
 That round a lonely ruin swells,
 Which, wandering on the echoing
 shore,

The enthusiast hears at evening:
 'Tis softer than the west wind's
 sigh; 50
 'Tis wilder than the unmeasured
 notes

Of that strange lyre whose strings
 The genii of the breezes sweep:
 Those lines of rainbow light
 Are like the moonbeams when they
 fall 55
 Through some cathedral window, but
 the tints
 Are such as may not find
 Comparison on earth.

Behold the chariot of the Fairy Queen!
 Celestial coursers paw the unyielding
 air; 60
 Their filmy pennons at her word they
 furl,
 And stop obedient to the reins of light:
 These the Queen of Spells drew in,
 She spread a charm around the spot,

And leaning graceful from the
 æthereal car, 65
 Long did she gaze, and silently,
 Upon the slumbering maid.
 Oh! not the visioned poet in his
 dreams,
 When silvery clouds float through the
 'wildered brain,
 When every sight of lovely, wild and
 grand 70
 Astonishes, enraptures, elevates,
 When fancy at a glance combines
 The wondrous and the beautiful,—
 So bright, so fair, so wild a shape
 Hath ever yet beheld, 75
 As that which reined the coursers of
 the air,
 And poured the magic of her gaze
 Upon the maiden's sleep.
 The broad and yellow moon
 Shone dimly through her form—
 That form of faultless symmetry; 81
 The pearly and pellucid car
 Moved not the moonlight's line:
 'Twas not an earthly pageant:
 Those who had looked upon the
 sight, 85
 Passing all human glory,
 Saw not the yellow moon,
 Saw not the mortal scene,
 Heard not the night-wind's rush,
 Heard not an earthly sound, 90
 Saw but the fairy pageant,
 Heard but the heavenly strains
 That filled the lonely dwelling.
 The Fairy's frame was slight, yon
 fibrous cloud,
 That catches but the palest tinge of
 even, 95
 And which the straining eye can
 hardly seize
 When melting into eastern twilight's
 shadow,
 Were scarce so thin, so slight; but the
 fair star
 That gems the glittering coronet of
 morn,
 Sheds not a light so mild, so power-
 ful, 100

As that which, bursting from the
 Fairy's form,
 Spread a purpureal halo round the
 scene,
 Yet with an undulating motion,
 Swayed to her outline gracefully.
 From her celestial car 105
 The Fairy Queen descended,
 And thrice she waved her wand
 Circled with wreaths of amaranth:
 Her thin and misty form
 Moved with the moving air, 110
 And the clear silver tones,
 As thus she spoke, were such
 As are unheard by all but gifted ear.

Fairy.

'Stars! your balmiest influence
 shed! 114
 Elements! your wrath suspend!
 Sleep, Ocean, in the rocky bounds
 That circle thy domain!
 Let not a breath be seen to stir
 Around yon grass-grown ruin's
 height,
 Let even the restless gossamer 120
 Sleep on the moveless air!
 Soul of Ianthe! thou,
 Judged alone worthy of the envied
 boon,
 That waits the good and the sincere;
 that waits
 Those who have struggled, and with
 resolute will 125
 Vanquished earth's pride and mean-
 ness, burst the chains,
 The icy chains of custom, and have
 shone
 The day-stars of their age;—Soul of
 Ianthe!
 Awake! arise!'

Sudden arose 130
 Ianthe's Soul; it stood
 All beautiful in naked purity,
 The perfect semblance of its bodily
 frame.
 Instinct with inexpressible beauty and
 grace,
 Each stain of earthliness 135

Had passed away, it reassumed
Its native dignity, and stood
Immortal amid ruin.

Upon the couch the body lay
Wrapped in the depth of slumber:
Its features were fixed and meaning-
less, 141

Yet animal life was there,
And every organ yet performed
Its natural functions: 'twas a sight
Of wonder to behold the body and soul.
The self-same lineaments, the same
Marks of identity were there: 147
Yet, oh, how different! One aspires to
Heaven,

Pants for its sempiternal heritage,
And ever-changing, ever-rising still,
Wantons in endless being. 151

The other, for a time the unwilling
sport

Of circumstance and passion, struggles
on;

Fleets through its sad duration
rapidly:

Then, like an useless and worn-out
machine, 155
Rots, perishes, and passes.

Fairy.

'Spirit! who hast dived so deep;
Spirit! who hast soared so high;
Thou the fearless, thou the mild,
Accept the boon thy worth hath
earned, 160
Ascend the car with me.'

Spirit.

'Do I dream? Is this new feeling
But a visioned ghost of slumber?
If indeed I am a soul,
A free, a disembodied soul, 165
Speak again to me.'

Fairy.

'I am the Fairy MAB: to me 'tis given
The wonders of the human world to
keep:
The secrets of the immeasurable past,
In the unflinching consciences of men,
Those stern, unflattering chroniclers,
I find: 171

The future, from the causes which
arise

In each event, I gather: not the sting
Which retributive memory implants
In the hard bosom of the selfish man;
Nor that ecstatic and exulting throb
Which virtue's votary feels when he
sums up 177

The thoughts and actions of a well-
spent day,

Are unforeseen, unregistered by me:
And it is yet permitted me, to rend 180
The veil of mortal frailty, that the
spirit,

Clothed in its changeless purity, may
know

How soonest to accomplish the great
end

For which it hath its being, and may
taste

That peace, which in the end all life
will share. 185

This is the meed of virtue; happy
Soul,

Ascend the car with me!'

The chains of earth's immurement
Fell from Ianthé's spirit;
They shrank and brake like bandages
of straw 190

Beneath a wakened giant's strength.
She knew her glorious change,
And felt in apprehension uncon-
trolled

New raptures opening round: 194
Each day-dream of her mortal life,
Each frenzied vision of the slumbers
That closed each well-spent day,
Seemed now to meet reality.

The Fairy and the Soul proceeded;
The silver clouds parted; 200
And as the car of magic they ascended,
Again the speechless music swelled,
Again the coursers of the air
Unfurled their azure pennons, and the
Queen

Shaking the beamy reins 205
Bade them pursue their way.

The magic car moved on.
The night was fair, and countless stars

Studded Heaven's dark blue vault,—
 Just o'er the eastern wave 210
 Peeped the first faint smile of
 morn:—
 The magic car moved on—
 From the celestial hoofs
 Theatmosphereinflamingsparklesflew,
 And where the burning wheels 215
 Eddied above the mountain's loftiest
 peak,
 Was traced a line of lightning.
 Now it flew far above a rock,
 The utmost verge of earth,
 The rival of the Andes, whose dark
 brow 220
 Lowered o'er the silver sea.
 Far, far below the chariot's path,
 Calm as a slumbering babe,
 Tremendous Ocean lay.
 The mirror of its stillness showed 225
 The pale and waning stars,
 The chariot's fiery track,
 And the gray light of morn
 Tinging those fleecy clouds
 That canopied the dawn. 230
 Seemed it, that the chariot's way
 Lay through the midst of an immense
 concave,
 Radiant with million constellations,
 tinged
 With shades of infinite colour,
 And semicircled with a belt 235
 Flashing incessant meteors.
 The magic car moved on.
 As they approached their goal
 The coursers seemed to gather speed;
 The sea no longer was distinguished;
 earth 240
 Appeared a vast and shadowy sphere;
 The sun's unclouded orb
 Rolled through the black concave;
 Its rays of rapid light
 Parted around the chariot's swifter
 course, 245
 And fell, like ocean's feathery spray
 Dashed from the boiling surge
 Before a vessel's prow.
 The magic car moved on.
 Earth's distant orb appeared 250

The smallest light that twinkles in the
 heaven;
 Whilst round the chariot's way
 Innumerable systems rolled,
 And countless spheres diffused
 An ever-varying glory. 255
 It was a sight of wonder: some
 Were horned like the crescent moon;
 Some shed a mild and silver beam
 Like Hesperus o'er the western sea;
 Some dashed athwart with trains of
 flame, 260
 Like worlds to death and ruin driven;
 Some shone like suns, and, as the
 chariot passed,
 Eclipsed all other light.

Spirit of Nature! here!
 In this interminable wilderness 265
 Of worlds, at whose immensity
 Even soaring fancy staggers,
 Here is thy fitting temple.
 Yet not the lightest leaf
 That quivers to the passing breeze 270
 Is less instinct with thee:
 Yet not the meanest worm
 That lurks in graves and fattens on the
 dead
 Less shares thy eternal breath.
 Spirit of Nature! thou! 275
 Imperishable as this scene,
 Here is thy fitting temple.

II

If solitude hath ever led thy steps
 To the wild Ocean's echoing shore,
 And thou hast lingered there,
 Until the sun's broad orb
 Seemed resting on the burnished
 wave, 5
 Thou must have marked the lines
 Of purple gold, that motionless
 Hung o'er the sinking sphere:
 Thou must have marked the billowy
 clouds
 Edged with intolerable radiancy 10
 Towering like rocks of jet
 Crowned with a diamond wreath.
 And yet there is a moment,

When the sun's highest point
 Peeps like a star o'er Ocean's western
 edge, 15
 When those far clouds of feathery gold,
 Shaded with deepest purple, gleam
 Like islands on a dark blue sea;
 Then has thy fancy soared above the
 earth,
 And furled its wearied wing 20
 Within the Fairy's fane.
 Yet not the golden islands
 Gleaming in yon flood of light,
 Nor the feathery curtains
 Stretching o'er the sun's bright
 couch, 25
 Nor the burnished Ocean waves
 Paving that gorgeous dome,
 So fair, so wonderful a sight
 As Mab's æthereal palace could afford.
 Yet likest evening's vault, that faery
 Hall! 30
 As Heaven, low resting on the wave, it
 spread
 Its floors of flashing light,
 Its vast and azure dome,
 Its fertile golden islands
 Floating on a silver sea; 35
 Whilst suns their mingling beamings
 darted
 Through clouds of circumambient
 darkness,
 And pearly battlements around
 Looked o'er the immense of Heaven.
 The magic car no longer moved. 40
 The Fairy and the Spirit
 Entered the Hall of Spells:
 Those golden clouds
 That rolled in glittering billows
 Beneath the azure canopy 45
 With the æthereal footsteps trembled
 not:
 The light and crimson mists,
 Floating to strains of thrilling melody
 Through that unearthly dwelling,
 Yielded to every movement of the will.
 Upon their passive swell the Spirit
 leaned, 51
 And, for the varied bliss that pressed
 around,

Used not the glorious privilege
 Of virtue and of wisdom.
 'Spirit!' the Fairy said, 55
 And pointed to the gorgeous dome,
 'This is a wondrous sight
 And mocks all human grandeur;
 But, were it virtue's only meed, to
 dwell
 In a celestial palace, all resigned 60
 To pleasurable impulses, immured
 Within the prison of itself, the will
 Of changeless Nature would be unful-
 filled.
 Learn to make others happy. Spirit,
 come!
 This is thine high reward:—the past
 shall rise; 65
 Thou shalt behold the present; I will
 teach
 The secrets of the future.'
 The Fairy and the Spirit
 Approached the overhanging battle-
 ment.—
 Below lay stretched the universe!
 There, far as the remotest line 71
 That bounds imagination's flight,
 Countless and unending orbs
 In mazy motion intermingled,
 Yet still fulfilled immutably 75
 Eternal Nature's law.
 Above, below, around,
 The circling systems formed
 A wilderness of harmony;
 Each with undeviating aim, 80
 In eloquent silence, through the depths
 of space
 Pursued its wondrous way.
 There was a little light
 That twinkled in the misty distance:
 None but a spirit's eye 85
 Might ken that rolling orb;
 None but a spirit's eye,
 And in no other place
 But that celestial dwelling, might
 behold
 Each action of this earth's inhabitants.
 But matter, space and time 91
 In those æreal mansions cease to act;

And all-prevailing wisdom, when it
 reaps
 The harvest of its excellence, o'er-
 bounds
 Those obstacles, of which an earthly
 soul 95
 Fears to attempt the conquest.

The Fairy pointed to the earth.
 The Spirit's intellectual eye
 Its kindred beings recognized.
 The thronging thousands, to a passing
 view, 100
 Seemed like an ant-hill's citizens.
 How wonderful! that even
 The passions, prejudices, interests,
 That sway the meanest being, the
 weak touch
 That moves the finest nerve, 105
 And in one human brain
 Causes the faintest thought, becomes
 a link
 In the great chain of Nature.

'Behold,' the Fairy cried,
 'Palmyra's ruined palaces!— 110
 Behold! where grandeur frowned;
 Behold! where pleasure smiled;
 What now remains?—the memory
 Of senselessness and shame—
 What is immortal there? 115
 Nothing—it stands to tell
 A melancholy tale, to give
 An awful warning: soon
 Oblivion will steal silently
 The remnant of its fame. 120
 Monarchs and conquerors there
 Proud o'er prostrate millions trod—
 The earthquakes of the human race;
 Like them, forgotten when the ruin
 That marks their shock is past.

'Beside the eternal Nile, 126
 The Pyramids have risen.
 Nile shall pursue his changeless way:
 Those Pyramids shall fall;
 Yea! not a stone shall stand to tell
 The spot whereon they stood! 131
 Their very site shall be forgotten,
 As is their builder's name!

'Behold yon sterile spot;
 Where now the wandering Arab's
 tent 135
 Flaps in the desert-blast.
 There once old Salem's haughty fane
 Reared high to Heaven its thousand
 golden domes,
 And in the blushing face of day
 Exposed its shameful glory. 140
 Oh! many a widow, many an orphan
 cursed
 The building of that fane; and many
 a father,
 Worn out with toil and slavery,
 implored
 The poor man's God to sweep it from
 the earth,
 And spare his children the detested
 task 145
 Of piling stone on stone, and poisoning
 The choicest days of life,
 To soothe a dotard's vanity.
 There an inhuman and uncultured race
 Howled hideous praises to their
 Demon-God; 150
 They rushed to war, tore from the
 mother's womb
 The unborn child,—old age and
 infancy
 Promiscuous perished; their vic-
 torious arms
 Left not a soul to breathe. Oh! they
 were fiends:
 But what was he who taught them
 that the God 155
 Of nature and benevolence hath given
 A special sanction to the trade of
 blood?
 His name and theirs are fading, and
 the tales
 Of this barbarian nation, which im-
 posture
 Recites till terror credits, are pursuing
 Itself into forgetfulness. 161
 'Where Athens, Rome, and Sparta
 stood,
 There is a moral desert now:
 The mean and miserable huts,
 The yet more wretched palaces, 165

Contrasted with those ancient fanes,
Now crumbling to oblivion;
The long and lonely colonnades,
Through which the ghost of Freedom
stalks,

Seem like a well-known tune, 170
Which in some dear scene we have
loved to hear,

Remembered now in sadness.

But, oh! how much more changed,
How gloomier is the contrast

Of human nature there! 175

Where Socrates expired, a tyrant's
slave,

A coward and a fool, spreads death
around—

Then, shuddering, meets his own.

Where Cicero and Antoninus lived,

A cowed and hypocritical monk 180

Prays, curses and deceives.

'Spirit, ten thousand years

Have scarcely passed away,

Since, in the waste where now the
savage drinks

His enemy's blood, and aping Europe's
sons, 185

Wakes the unholy song of war,

Arose a stately city,

Metropolis of the western continent:

There, now, the mossy column-
stone, 189

Indented by Time's unrelaxing grasp,

Which once appeared to brave

All, save its country's ruin;

There the wide forest scene,

Rude in the uncultivated loveliness

Of gardens long run wild, 195

Seems, to the unwilling sojourner,
whose steps

Chance in that desert has delayed,

Thus to have stood since earth was
what it is.

Yet once it was the busiest haunt,

Whither, as to a common centre,
flocked 200

Strangers, and ships, and merchan-
dise:

Once peace and freedom blessed

The cultivated plain:

But wealth, that curse of man,
Blighted the bud of its prosperity: 205
Virtue and wisdom, truth and liberty,
Fled, to return not, until man shall
know

That they alone can give the bliss

Worthy a soul that claims

Its kindred with eternity. 210

'There's not one atom of yon
earth

But once was living man;

Nor the minutest drop of rain,

That hangeth in its thinnest cloud,

But flowed in human veins: 215

And from the burning plains

Where Libyan monsters yell,

From the most gloomy glens

Of Greenland's sunless clime,

To where the golden fields 220

Of fertile England spread

Their harvest to the day,

Thou canst not find one spot

Whereon no city stood. 224

'How strange is human pride!

I tell thee that those living things,

To whom the fragile blade of grass,

That springeth in the morn

And perisheth ere noon,

Is an unbounded world; 230

I tell thee that those viewless beings,

Whose mansion is the smallest particle

Of the impassive atmosphere,

Think, feel and live like man;

That their affections and antipathies,

Like his, produce the laws 236

Ruling their moral state;

And the minutest throb

That through their frame diffuses

The slightest, faintest motion, 240

Is fixed and indispensable

As the majestic laws

That rule yon rolling orbs.'

The Fairy paused. The Spirit,

In ecstasy of admiration, felt 245

All knowledge of the past revived; the
events

Of old and wondrous times,

Which dim tradition interruptedly

Teaches the credulous vulgar, were unfolded

In just perspective to the view; 250
Yet dim from their infinitude.

The Spirit seemed to stand
High on an isolated pinnacle;
The flood of ages combating below,
The depth of the unbounded universe
Above, and all around 256
Nature's unchanging harmony.

III

'FAIRY!' the Spirit said,
And on the Queen of Spells
Fixed her aethereal eyes,
'I thank thee. Thou hast given
A boon which I will not resign, and taught 5
A lesson not to be unlearned. I know
The past, and thence I will essay to glean
A warning for the future, so that man
May profit by his errors, and derive
Experience from his folly: 10
For, when the power of imparting joy
Is equal to the will, the human soul
Requires no other Heaven.'

Mab.

'Turn thee, surpassing Spirit!
Much yet remains unscanned. 15
Thou knowest how great is man,
Thou knowest his imbecility:
Yet learn thou what he is:
Yet learn the lofty destiny
Which restless time prepares 20
For every living soul.
'Behold a gorgeous palace, that, amid
Yon populous city rears its thousand
towers
And seems itself a city. Gloomy
troops
Of sentinels, in stern and silent ranks,
Encompass it around: the dweller
there 26
Cannot be free and happy; hearest
thou not
The curses of the fatherless, the groans

Of those who have no friend? He
passes on:

The King, the wearer of a gilded chain
That binds his soul to abjectness, the
fool 31

Whom courtiers nickname monarch,
whilst a slave

Even to the basest appetites—that man
Heeds not the shriek of penury; he
smiles

At the deep curses which the destitute
Mutter in secret, and a sullen joy 36
Pervades his bloodless heart when
thousands groan

But for those morsels which his wantonness

Wastes in unjoyous revelry, to save
All that they love from famine: when
he hears 40

The tale of horror, to some ready-made
face

Of hypocritical assent he turns,
Smothering the glow of shame, that,
spite of him,

Flushes his bloated cheek.

Now to the meal
Of silence, grandeur, and excess, he
drags 45

His palled unwilling appetite. If gold,
Gleaming around, and numerous
viands culled

From every clime, could force the
loathing sense

To overcome satiety,—if wealth
The spring it draws from poisons
not,—or vice, 50

Unfeeling, stubborn vice, converteth
not

Its food to deadliest venom; then that
king

Is happy; and the peasant who fulfils
His unforced task, when he returns at
even,

And by the blazing faggot meets again
Her welcome for whom all his toil is
sped, 56

Tastes not a sweeter meal.

Behold him now
Stretched on the gorgeous couch; his
fevered brain

Reels dizzily awhile: but ah! too soon
 The slumber of intemperance sub-
 sides, 60
 And conscience, that undying serpent,
 calls
 Her venomous brood to their noctur-
 nal task.
 Listen! he speaks! oh! mark that
 frenzied eye—
 Oh! mark that deadly visage.'

King.

'No cessation!
 Oh! must this last for ever? Awful
 Death, 65
 I wish, yet fear to clasp thee!—Not
 one moment
 Of dreamless sleep! O dear and blessed
 peace!
 Why dost thou shroud thy vestal
 purity
 In penury and dungeons? wherefore
 lurkest
 With danger, death, and solitude; yet
 shunn'st 70
 The palace I have built thee? Sacred
 peace!
 Oh visit me but once, but pitying shed
 One drop of balm upon my withered
 soul.'

The Fairy.

'Vain man! that palace is the virtuous
 heart,
 And Peace defileth not her snowy
 robes 75
 In such a shed as thine. Hark! yet he
 mutters;
 His slumbers are but varied agonies,
 They prey like scorpions on the springs
 of life.
 There needeth not the hell that bigots
 frame
 To punish those who err: earth in
 itself 80
 Contains at once the evil and the cure;
 And all-sufficing Nature can chastise
 Those who transgress her law,—she
 only knows
 How justly to proportion to the fault
 The punishment it merits.

Is it strange 85
 That this poor wretch should pride
 him in his woe?
 Take pleasure in his abjectness, and hug
 The scorpion that consumes him? Is
 it strange
 That, placed on a conspicuous throne
 of thorns,
 Grasping an iron sceptre, and im-
 mured 90
 Within a splendid prison, whose stern
 bounds
 Shut him from all that's good or dear
 on earth,
 His soul asserts not its humanity?
 That man's mild nature rises not in
 war
 Against a king's employ? No—'tis not
 strange. 95
 He, like the vulgar, thinks, feels, acts
 and lives
 Just as his father did; the uncon-
 quered powers
 Of precedent and custom interpose
 Between a *king* and virtue. Stranger
 yet,
 To those who know not Nature, nor
 deduce 100
 The future from the present, it may
 seem,
 That not one slave, who suffers from
 the crimes
 Of this unnatural being; not one
 wretch,
 Whose children famish, and whose
 nuptial bed
 Is earth's unpitying bosom, rears an
 arm 105
 To dash him from his throne!
 Those gilded flies
 That, basking in the sunshine of a
 court,
 Fatten on its corruption!—what are
 they?
 —The drones of the community; they
 feed
 On the mechanic's labour: the starved
 hind 110
 For them compels the stubborn glebe
 to yield

Its unshared harvests ; and yon squalid
form,
Leaner than fleshless misery, that
wastes
A sunless life in the unwholesome
mine,
Drags out in labour a protracted death,
To glut their grandeur ; many faint
with toil, 116
That few may know the cares and woe
of sloth.

'Whence, think'st thou, kings and
parasites arose ?
Whence that unnatural line of drones,
who heap
Toil and unvanquishable penury 120
On those who build their palaces, and
bring
Their daily bread ?—From vice, black
loathsome vice ;
From rapine, madness, treachery, and
wrong ;
From all that 'genders misery, and
makes
Of earth this thorny wilderness ; from
lust, 125
Revenge, and murder. . . . And when
Reason's voice,
Loud as the voice of Nature, shall have
waked
The nations ; and mankind perceive
that vice
Is discord, war, and misery ; that
virtue
Is peace, and happiness and harmony ;
When man's maturer nature shall dis-
dain 131
The playthings of its childhood ;—
kingly glare
Will lose its power to dazzle ; its
authority
Will silently pass by ; the gorgeous
throne
Shall stand unnoticed in the regal
hall, 135
Fast falling to decay ; whilst false-
hood's trade
Shall be as hateful and unprofitable
As that of truth is now.

Where is the fame
Which the vainglorious mighty of the
earth
Seek to eternize ? Oh ! the faintest
sound 140
From Time's light footfall, the minu-
test wave
That swells the flood of ages, whelms
in nothing
The unsubstantial bubble. Ay ! to-day
Stern is the tyrant's mandate, red the
gaze
That flashes desolation, strong the
arm 145
That scatters multitudes. To-morrow
comes !
That mandate is a thunder-peal that
died
In ages past ; that gaze, a transient
flash
On which the midnight closed, and on
that arm
The worm has made his meal.
The virtuous man, 150
Who, great in his humility, as kings
Are little in their grandeur ; he who
leads
Invincibly a life of resolute good,
And stands amid the silent dungeon-
depths
More free and fearless than the tremb-
ling judge, 155
Who, clothed in venal power, vainly
strove
To bind the impassive spirit ;—when
he falls,
His mild eye beams benevolence no
more :
Withered the hand outstretched but
to relieve ;
Sunk Reason's simple eloquence, that
rolled 160
But to appal the guilty. Yes ! the
grave
Hath quenched that eye, and Death's
relentless frost
Withered that arm : but the unfading
fame
Which Virtue hangs upon its votary's
tomb ;

The deathless memory of that man,
whom kings 165
Call to their mind and tremble; the
remembrance
With which the happy spirit contem-
plates
Its well-spent pilgrimage on earth,
Shall never pass away.

'Nature rejects the monarch, not the
man; 170
The subject, not the citizen: for kings
And subjects, mutual foes, forever
play
A losing game into each other's hands,
Whose stakes are vice and misery.
The man
Of virtuous soul commands not, nor
obeys. 175
Power, like a desolating pestilence,
Pollutes whate'er it touches; and obe-
dience,
Bane of all genius, virtue, freedom,
truth,
Makes slaves of men, and, of the human
frame,
A mechanized automaton.

When Nero, 180
High over flaming Rome, with savage
joy
Lowered like a fiend, drank with
enraptured ear
The shrieks of agonizing death, beheld
The frightful desolation spread, and
felt
A new-created sense within his soul
Thrill to the sight, and vibrate to the
sound; 186
Think'st thou his grandeur had not
overcome
The force of human kindness? and,
when Rome,
With one stern blow, hurled not the
tyrant down,
Crushed not the arm red with her
dearest blood, 190
Had not submissive abjectness de-
stroyed
Nature's suggestions?

Look on yonder earth:

The golden harvests spring; the un-
failing sun
Sheds light and life; the fruits, the
flowers, the trees,
Arise in due succession; all things
speak 195
Peace, harmony, and love. The uni-
verse,
In Nature's silent eloquence, declares
That all fulfil the works of love and
joy,—
All but the outcast, Man. He fabri-
cates
The sword which stabs his peace; he
cherisheth 200
The snakes that gnaw his heart; he
raiseth up
The tyrant, whose delight is in his woe,
Whose sport is in his agony. Yon sun,
Lights it the great alone? Yon silver
beams,
Sleep they less sweetly on the cottage
thatch 205
Than on the dome of kings? Is mother
Earth
A step-dame to her numerous sons,
who earn
Her unshared gifts with unremitting
toil;
A mother only to those puling babes
Who, nursed in ease and luxury, make
men 210
The playthings of their babyhood, and
mar,
In self-important childishness, that
peace
Which men alone appreciate?

'Spirit of Nature! no.
The pure diffusion of thy essence throbs
Alike in every human heart. 216
Thou, aye, erectest there
Thy throne of power unappealable:
Thou art the judge beneath whose nod
Man's brief and frail authority 220
Is powerless as the wind
That passeth idly by.
Thine the tribunal which surpasseth
The show of human justice,
As God surpasses man. 225

'Spirit of Nature! thou
 Life of interminable multitudes;
 Soul of those mighty spheres
 Whose changeless paths through
 Heaven's deep silence lie;
 Soul of that smallest being, 230
 The dwelling of whose life
 Is one faint April sun-gleam;—
 Man, like these passive things,
 Thy will unconsciously fulfilleth:
 Like theirs, his age of endless peace,
 Which time is fast maturing, 236
 Will swiftly, surely come;
 And the unbounded frame, which thou
 pervadest,
 Will be without a flaw
 Marring its perfect symmetry. 240

IV

'How beautiful this night! the balmiest
 sigh,
 Which vernal zephyrs breathe in even-
 ing's ear,
 Were discord to the speaking quietude
 That wraps this moveless scene.
 Heaven's ebon vault,
 Studded with stars unutterably bright,
 Through which the moon's unclouded
 grandeur rolls, 6
 Seems like a canopy which love had
 spread
 To curtain her sleeping world. Yon
 gentle hills,
 Robed in a garment of untrodden
 snow;
 Yon darksome rocks, whence icicles
 depend, 10
 So stainless, that their white and
 glittering spires
 Tinge not the moon's pure beam; yon
 castled steep,
 Whose banner hangeth o'er the time-
 worn tower
 So idly, that rapt fancy deemeth it
 A metaphor of peace;—all form a
 scene 15
 Where musing Solitude might love to
 lift

Her soul above this sphere of earthli-
 ness;
 Where Silence undisturbed might
 watch alone,
 So cold, so bright, so still. The orb of day,
 In southern climes, o'er ocean's wave-
 less field 20
 Sinks sweetly smiling: not the faintest
 breath
 Steals o'er the unruffled deep; the
 clouds of eve
 Reflect unmoved the lingering beam
 of day;
 And vesper's image on the western
 main
 Is beautifully still. To-morrow comes:
 Cloud upon cloud, in dark and deepen-
 ing mass, 26
 Roll o'er the blackened waters; the
 deep roar
 Of distant thunder mutters awfully;
 Tempest unfolds its pinion o'er the
 gloom
 That shrouds the boiling surge; the
 pitiless fiend, 30
 With all his winds and lightnings,
 tracks his prey;
 The torn deep yawns,—the vessel finds
 a grave
 Beneath its jagged gulf.
 Ah! whence yon glare
 That fires the arch of Heaven?—that
 dark red smoke
 Blotting the silver moon? The stars
 are quenched 35
 In darkness, and the pure and spang-
 ling snow
 Gleams faintly through the gloom that
 gathers round!
 Hark to that roar, whose swift and
 deaf'ning peals
 In countless echoes through the moun-
 tains ring,
 Startling pale Midnight on her starry
 throne! 40
 Now swells the intermingling din; the
 jar
 Frequent and frightful of the bursting
 bomb;

The falling beam, the shriek, the
 groan, the shout,
 The ceaseless clangour, and the rush of
 men
 Inebriate with rage:—loud, and more
 loud 45
 The discord grows; till pale Death
 shuts the scene,
 And o'er the conqueror and the con-
 quered draws
 His cold and bloody shroud.—Of all
 the men
 Whom day's departing beam saw
 blooming there,
 In proud and vigorous health; of all
 the hearts 50
 That beat with anxious life at sunset
 there;
 How few survive, how few are beating
 now!
 All is deep silence, like the fearful calm
 That slumbers in the storm's porten-
 tuous pause;
 Save when the frantic wail of widowed
 love 55
 Comes shuddering on the blast, or the
 faint moan
 With which some soul bursts from the
 frame of clay
 Wrapped round its struggling powers.
 The gray morn
 Dawns on the mournful scene; the
 sulphurous smoke
 Before the icy wind slow rolls away,
 And the bright beams of frosty morn-
 ing dance 61
 Along the spangling snow. There
 tracks of blood
 Even to the forest's depth, and scat-
 tered arms,
 And lifeless warriors, whose hard linea-
 ments
 Death's self could change not, mark
 the dreadful path 65
 Of the outsallying victors: far behind,
 Black ashes note where their proud
 city stood.
 Within yon forest is a gloomy glen—
 Each tree which guards its darkness
 from the day,

Waves o'er a warrior's tomb.
 I see thee shrink, 70
 Surpassing Spirit!—wert thou human
 else?
 I see a shade of doubt and horror fleet
 Across thy stainless features: yet fear
 not;
 This is no unconnected misery,
 Nor stands uncaused, and irretriev-
 able. 75
 Man's evil nature, that apology
 Which kings who rule, and cowards
 who crouch, set up
 For their unnumbered crimes, sheds
 not the blood
 Which desolates the discord-wasted
 land.
 From kings, and priests, and states-
 men, war arose, 80
 Whose safety is man's deep unbettered
 woe,
 Whose grandeur his debasement. Let
 the axe
 Strike at the root, the poison-tree will
 fall;
 And where its venom'd exhalations
 spread
 Ruin, and death, and woe, where
 millions lay 85
 Quenching the serpent's famine, and
 their bones
 Bleaching unburied in the putrid
 blast,
 A garden shall arise, in loveliness
 Surpassing fabled Eden.
 Hath Nature's soul,
 That formed this world so beautiful,
 that spread 90
 Earth's lap with plenty, and life's
 smallest chord
 Strung to unchanging unison, that
 gave
 The happy birds their dwelling in the
 grove,
 That yielded to the wanderers of the
 deep
 The lovely silence of the unfathomed
 main, 95
 And filled the meanest worm that
 crawls in dust

With spirit, thought, and love; on
 Man alone,
 Partial in causeless malice, wantonly
 Heaped ruin, vice, and slavery; his soul
 Blasted with withering curses; placed
 afar 100
 The meteor-happiness, that shuns his
 grasp,
 But serving on the frightful gulf to
 glare,
 Rent wide beneath his footsteps?
 Nature!—no!
 Kings, priests, and statesmen, blast
 the human flower
 Even in its tender bud; their influence
 darts 105
 Like subtle poison through the blood-
 less veins
 Of desolate society. The child,
 Ere he can lisp his mother's sacred
 name,
 Swells with the unnatural pride of
 crime, and lifts
 His baby-sword even in a hero's
 mood. 110
 This infant-arm becomes the bloodiest
 scourge
 Of devastated earth; whilst specious
 names,
 Learned in soft childhood's unsuspect-
 ing hour,
 Serve as the sophisms with which man-
 hood dims
 Bright Reason's ray, and sanctifies the
 sword 115
 Upraised to shed a brother's innocent
 blood.
 Let priest-led slaves cease to proclaim
 that man
 Inherits vice and misery, when Force
 And Falsehood hang even o'er the
 cradled babe,
 Stifling with rudest grasp all natural
 good. 120
 'Ah! to the stranger-soul, when first
 it peeps
 From its new tenement, and looks
 abroad
 For happiness and sympathy, how
 stern

And desolate a tract is this wide world!
 How withered all the buds of natural
 good! 125
 No shade, no shelter from the sweep-
 ing storms
 Of pitiless power! On its wretched
 frame,
 Poisoned, perchance, by the disease
 and woe
 Heaped on the wretched parent whence
 it sprung
 By morals, law, and custom, the pure
 winds 130
 Of Heaven, that renovate the insect
 tribes,
 May breathe not. The untainting light
 of day
 May visit not its longings. It is bound
 Ere it has life: yea, all the chains are
 forged
 Long ere its being: all liberty and love
 And peace is torn from its defenceless-
 ness; 136
 Cursed from its birth, even from its
 cradle doomed
 To abjectness and bondage!

 'Throughout this varied and eternal
 world
 Soul is the only element: the block 140
 That for uncounted ages has remained
 The moveless pillar of a mountain's
 weight
 Is active, living spirit. Every grain
 Is sentient both in unity and part,
 And the minutest atom comprehends
 A world of loves and hatreds; these
 beget 146
 Evil and good: hence truth and false-
 hood spring;
 Hence will and thought and action,
 all the germs
 Of pain or pleasure, sympathy or hate,
 That variegate the eternal universe.
 Soul is not more polluted than the
 beams 152
 Of Heaven's pure orb, ere round their
 rapid lines
 The taint of earth-born atmospheres
 arise.

'Man is of soul and body, formed for
 deeds
 Of high resolve, on fancy's boldest
 wing 155
 To soar unwearied, fearlessly to turn
 The keenest pangs to peacefulness,
 and taste
 The joys which mingled sense and
 spirit yield.
 Or he is formed for abjectness and woe,
 To grovel on the dunghill of his fears,
 To shrink at every sound, to quench
 the flame 161
 Of natural love in sensualism, to know
 That hour as blessed 'when on his
 worthless days
 The frozen hand of Death shall set its
 seal,
 Yet fear the cure, though hating the
 disease. 165
 The one is man that shall hereafter
 be;
 The other, man as vice has made him
 now.
 'War is the statesman's game, the
 priest's delight,
 The lawyer's jest, the hired assassin's
 trade,
 And, to those royal murderers, whose
 mean thrones 170
 Are bought by crimes of treachery and
 gore,
 The bread they eat, the staff on which
 they lean.
 Guards, garbed in blood-red livery,
 surround
 Their palaces, participate the crimes
 That force defends, and from a nation's
 rage 175
 Secure the crown, which all the curses
 reach
 That famine, frenzy, woe and penury
 breathe.
 These are the hired bravos who defend
 The tyrant's throne—the bullies of his
 fear:
 These are the sinks and channels of
 worst vice, 180

The refuse of society, the dregs
 Of all that is most vile: their cold
 hearts blend
 Deceit with sternness, ignorance with
 pride,
 All that is mean and villanous, with
 rage
 Which hopelessness of good, and self-
 contempt, 185
 Alone might kindle; they are decked
 in wealth,
 Honour and power, then are sent
 abroad
 To do their work. The pestilence that
 stalks
 In gloomy triumph through some
 eastern land
 Is less destroying. They cajole with
 gold, 190
 And promises of fame, the thoughtless
 youth
 Already crushed with servitude: he
 knows
 His wretchedness too late, and
 cherishes
 Repentance for his ruin, when his
 doom
 Is sealed in gold and blood! 195
 Those too the tyrant serve, who,
 skilled to snare
 The feet of Justice in the toils of law,
 Stand, ready to oppress the weaker
 still;
 And right or wrong will vindicate for
 gold,
 Sneering at public virtue, which be-
 neath 200
 Their pitiless tread lies torn and
 trampled, where
 Honour sits smiling at the sale of truth.
 'Then grave and hoary-headed hypo-
 crites,
 Without a hope, a passion, or a love,
 Who, through a life of luxury and lies,
 Have crept by flattery to the seats of
 power, 206
 Support the system whence their hon-
 ours flow. . . .

They have three words:—well tyrants
 know their use,
 Well pay them for the loan, with usury
 Torn from a bleeding world!—God,
 Hell, and Heaven. 210
 A vengeful, pitiless, and almighty
 fiend,
 Whose mercy is a nickname for the
 rage
 Of tameless tigers hungering for blood.
 Hell, a red gulf of everlasting fire,
 Where poisonous and undying worms
 prolong 215
 Eternal misery to those hapless slaves
 Whose life has been a penance for its
 crimes.
 And Heaven, a meed for those who
 dare belie
 Their human nature, quake, believe,
 and cringe
 Before the mockeries of earthly power.

 ‘These tools the tyrant tempers to his
 work, 221
 Wields in his wrath, and as he wills
 destroys,
 Omnipotent in wickedness: the while
 Youth springs, age moulders, manhood
 tamely does
 His bidding, bribed by short-lived joys
 to lend 225
 Force to the weakness of his trembling
 arm.

 ‘They rise, they fall; one generation
 comes
 Yielding its harvest to destruction’s
 scythe.
 It fades, another blossoms: yet be-
 hold!
 Red glows the tyrant’s stamp-mark on
 its bloom, 230
 Withering and cankering deep its pas-
 sive prime.
 He has invented lying words and
 modes,
 Empty and vain as his own coreless
 heart;
 Evasive meanings, nothings of much
 sound,

To lure the heedless victim to the
 toils 235
 Spread round the valley of its paradise.

 ‘Look to thyself, priest, conqueror, or
 prince!
 Whether thy trade is falsehood, and
 thy lusts
 Deep wallow in the earnings of the
 poor,
 With whom thy Master was:—or thou
 delight’st 240
 In numbering o’er the myriads of thy
 slain,
 All misery weighing nothing in the
 scale
 Against thy short-lived fame: or thou
 dost load
 With cowardice and crime the groan-
 ing land,
 A pomp-fed king. Look to thy
 wretched self! 245
 Ay, art thou not the veriest slave that
 e’er
 Crawled on the loathing earth? Are
 not thy days
 Days of unsatisfying listlessness?
 Dost thou not cry, ere night’s long rack
 is o’er,
 “When will the morning come?” Is
 not thy youth 250
 A vain and feverish dream of sen-
 sualism?
 Thy manhood blighted with unripe
 disease?
 Are not thy views of unregretted death
 Drear, comfortless, and horrible? Thy
 mind,
 Is it not morbid as thy nerveless
 frame, 255
 Incapable of judgement, hope, or love?
 And dost thou wish the errors to
 survive
 That bar thee from all sympathies of
 good,
 After the miserable interest
 Thou hold’st in their protraction?
 When the grave 260
 Has swallowed up thy memory and
 thyself,

Dost thou desire the bane that poisons
 earth
 To twine its roots around thy coffined
 clay,
 Spring from thy bones, and blossom
 on thy tomb,
 That of its fruit thy babes may eat and
 die? 265

V

‘Thus do the generations of the earth
 Go to the grave, and issue from the
 womb,
 Surviving still the imperishable change
 That renovates the world; even as the
 leaves
 Which the keen frost-wind of the waning
 year 5
 Has scattered on the forest soil, and
 heaped
 For many seasons there—though long
 they choke,
 Loading with loathsome rottenness the
 land,
 All germs of promise, yet when the
 tall trees
 From which they fell, shorn of their
 lovely shapes, 10
 Lie level with the earth to moulder
 there,
 They fertilize the land they long de-
 formed,
 Till from the breathing lawn a forest
 springs
 Of youth, integrity, and loveliness,
 Like that which gave it life, to spring
 and die. 15
 Thus suicidal selfishness, that blights
 The fairest feelings of the opening
 heart,
 Is destined to decay, whilst from the
 soil
 Shall spring all virtue, all delight, all
 love,
 And judgement cease to wage un-
 natural war 20
 With passion’s unsubduable array.
 Twin-sister of religion, selfishness!
 Rival in crime and falsehood, aping
 all

The wanton horrors of her bloody
 play;
 Yet frozen, unimpassioned, spiritless,
 Shunning the light, and owning not its
 name, 26
 Compelled, by its deformity, to screen
 With flimsy veil of justice and of right,
 Its unattractive lineaments, that scare
 All, save the brood of ignorance: at
 once 30
 The cause and the effect of tyranny;
 Unblushing, hardened, sensual, and
 vile;
 Dead to all love but of its abjectness,
 With heart impassive by more noble
 powers
 Than unshared pleasure, sordid gain,
 or fame; 35
 Despising its own miserable being,
 Which still it longs, yet fears to dis-
 enthrall.
 ‘Hence commerce springs, the venal
 interchange
 Of all that human art or nature yield;
 Which wealth should purchase not, but
 want demand, 40
 And natural kindness hasten to supply
 From the full fountain of its boundless
 love,
 For ever stifled, drained, and tainted
 now.
 Commerce! beneath whose poison-
 breathing shade
 No solitary virtue dares to spring, 45
 But Poverty and Wealth with equal
 hand
 Scatter their withering curses, and
 unfold
 The doors of premature and violent
 death,
 To pining famine and full-fed disease,
 To all that shares the lot of human
 life, 50
 Which poisoned, body and soul, scarce
 drags the chain,
 That lengthens as it goes and clanks
 behind.
 ‘Commerce has set the mark of selfish-
 ness,

The signet of its all-enslaving power
 Upon a shining ore, and called it gold :
 Before whose image bow the vulgar
 great, 56
 The vainly rich, the miserable proud,
 The mob of peasants, nobles, priests,
 and kings,
 And with blind feelings reverence the
 power
 That grinds them to the dust of misery.
 But in the temple of their hireling
 hearts 61
 Gold is a living god, and rules in scorn
 All earthly things but virtue.

'Since tyrants, by the sale of human
 life,
 Heap luxuries to their sensualism, and
 fame 65
 To their wide-wasting and insatiate
 pride,
 Success has sanctioned to a credulous
 world
 The ruin, the disgrace, the woe of war.
 His hosts of blind and unresisting
 dupes
 The despot numbers ; from his cabinet
 These puppets of his schemes he moves
 at will, 71
 Even as the slaves by force or famine
 driven,
 Beneath a vulgar master, to perform
 A task of cold and brutal drudgery ;—
 Hardened to hope, insensible to fear, 75
 Scarce living pulleys of a dead
 machine,
 Mere wheels of work and articles of
 trade,
 That grace the proud and noisy pomp
 of wealth !

'The harmony and happiness of man
 Yields to the wealth of nations ; that
 which lifts 80
 His nature to the heaven of its pride,
 Is bartered for the poison of his soul ;
 The weight that drags to earth his
 towering hopes,
 Blighting all prospect but of selfish
 gain,

Withering all passion but of slavish
 fear, 85
 Extinguishing all free and generous
 love
 Of enterprise and daring, even the
 pulse
 That fancy kindles in the beating heart
 To mingle with sensation, it de-
 stroys,—
 Leaves nothing but the sordid lust of
 self, 90
 The grovelling hope of interest and
 gold,
 Unqualified, unmingled, unredeemed
 Even by hypocrisy.

And statesmen boast
 Of wealth ! The wordy eloquence, that
 lives
 After the ruin of their hearts, can gild
 The bitter poison of a nation's woe, 96
 Can turn the worship of the servile mob
 To their corrupt and glaring idol,
 Fame,
 From Virtue, trampled by its iron
 tread,
 Although its dazzling pedestal be
 raised 100
 Amid the horrors of a limb-strewn
 field,
 With desolated dwellings smoking
 round.
 The man of ease, who, by his warm
 fireside,
 To deeds of charitable intercourse,
 And bare fulfilment of the common
 laws 105
 Of decency and prejudice, confines
 The struggling nature of his human
 heart,
 Is duped by their cold sophistry ; he
 sheds
 A passing tear perchance upon the
 wreck
 Of earthly peace, when near his dwell-
 ing's door 110
 The frightful waves are driven,—when
 his son
 Is murdered by the tyrant, or religion
 Drives his wife raving mad. But the
 poor man,

Whose life is misery, and fear, and
 care;
 Whom the morn wakens but to fruit-
 less toil; 115
 Who ever hears his famished off-
 spring's scream,
 Whom their pale mother's uncom-
 plaining gaze
 For ever meets, and the proud rich
 man's eye
 Flashing command, and the heart-
 breaking scene
 Of thousands like himself;—he little
 heeds 120
 The rhetoric of tyranny; his hate
 Is quenchless as his wrongs; he laughs
 to scorn
 The vain and bitter mockery of
 words,
 Feeling the horror of the tyrant's
 deeds,
 And unrestrained but by the arm of
 power, 125
 That knows and dreads his enmity.

 'The iron rod of Penury still compels
 Her wretched slave to bow the knee to
 wealth,
 And poison, with unprofitable toil,
 A life too void of solace to confirm 130
 The very chains that bind him to his
 doom.
 Nature, impartial in munificence,
 Has gifted man with all-subduing
 will.
 Matter, with all its transitory shapes,
 Lies subjected and plastic at his feet,
 That, weak from bondage, tremble as
 they tread. 136
 How many a rustic Milton has passed
 by,
 Stifling the speechless longings of his
 heart,
 In unremitting drudgery and care!
 How many a vulgar Cato has com-
 pelled 140
 His energies, no longer tameless then,
 To mould a pin, or fabricate a nail!
 How many a Newton, to whose passive
 ken

Those mighty spheres that gem in-
 finity
 Were only specks of tinsel, fixed in
 Heaven 145
 To light the midnights of his native
 town!

 'Yet every heart contains perfection's
 germ:
 The wisest of the sages of the earth,
 That ever from the stores of reason
 drew
 Science and truth, and virtue's dread-
 less tone, 150
 Were but a weak and inexperienced
 boy,
 Proud, sensual, unimpassioned, unim-
 bued
 With pure desire and universal love,
 Compared to that high being, of cloud-
 less brain,
 Untainted passion, elevated will, 155
 Which Death (who even would linger
 long in awe
 Within his noble presence, and beneath
 His changeless eyebeam) might alone
 subdue.
 Him, every slave now dragging through
 the filth
 Of some corrupted city his sad life, 160
 Pining with famine, swoln with luxury,
 Blunting the keenness of his spiritual
 sense
 With narrow schemings and unworthy
 cares,
 Or madly rushing through all violent
 crime,
 To move the deep stagnation of his
 soul,— 165
 Might imitate and equal.

 But mean lust
 Has bound its chains so tight around
 the earth,
 That all within it but the virtuous man
 Is venal: gold or fame will surely reach
 The price prefixed by selfishness, to all
 But him of resolute and unchanging
 will; 171
 Whom, nor the plaudits of a servile
 crowd,

Nor the vile joys of tainting luxury,
 Can bribe to yield his elevated soul
 To Tyranny or Falsehood, though they
 wield 175
 With blood-red hand the sceptre of the
 world.

‘All things are sold: the very light of
 Heaven

Is venal; earth’s unsparing gifts of
 love,

The smallest and most despicable
 things 179

That lurk in the abysses of the deep,
 All objects of our life, even life itself,
 And the poor pittance which the laws
 allow

Of liberty, the fellowship of man,
 Those duties which his heart of human
 love

Should urge him to perform instinc-
 tively, 185

Are bought and sold as in a public mart
 Of disguising selfishness, that sets
 On each its price, the stamp-mark of
 her reign.

Even love is sold; the solace of all woe
 Is turned to deadliest agony, old age
 Shivers in selfish beauty’s loathing
 arms, 191

And youth’s corrupted impulses pre-
 pare

A life of horror from the blighting bane
 Of commerce; whilst the pestilence
 that springs

From unenjoying sensualism, has
 filled 195

All human life with hydra-headed
 woes.

‘Falsehood demands but gold to pay
 the pangs

Of outraged conscience; for the slavish
 priest

Sets no great value on his hireling
 faith:

A little passing pomp, some servile
 souls, 200

Whom cowardice itself might safely
 chain,

Or the spare mite of avarice could
 bribe

To deck the triumph of their languid
 zeal,

Can make him minister to tyranny.

More daring crime requires a loftier
 meed: 205

Without a shudder, the slave-soldier
 lends

His arm to murderous deeds, and steels
 his heart,

When the dread eloquence of dying
 men,

Low mingling on the lonely field of
 fame,

Assails that nature, whose applause he
 sells 210

For the gross blessings of a patriot
 mob,

For the vile gratitude of heartless
 kings,

And for a cold world’s good word,—
 viler still!

‘There is a nobler glory, which
 survives

Until our being fades, and, solacing 215
 All human care, accompanies its
 change;

Deserts not virtue in the dungeon’s
 gloom,

And, in the precincts of the palace,
 guides

Its footsteps through that labyrinth of
 crime;

Imbues his lineaments with dauntless-
 ness, 220

Even when, from Power’s avenging
 hand, he takes

Its sweetest, last and noblest title—
 death;

—The consciousness of good, which
 neither gold,

Nor sordid fame, nor hope of heavenly
 bliss

Can purchase; but a life of resolute
 good, 225

Unalterable will, quenchless desire
 Of universal happiness, the heart

That beats with it in unison, the brain

Whose ever wakeful wisdom toils to
change
Reason's rich stores for its eternal
weal. 230

'This commerce of sincerest virtue
needs

No mediative signs of selfishness,
No jealous intercourse of wretched gain,
No balancings of prudence, cold and
long;

In just and equal measure all is
weighed, 235

One scale contains the sum of human
weal,

And one, the good man's heart.

How vainly seek
The selfish for that happiness denied
To aught but virtue! Blind and
hardened, they,

Who hope for peace amid the storms of
care, 240

Who covet power they know not how
to use,

And sigh for pleasure they refuse to
give,—

Madly they frustrate still their own
designs;

And, where they hope that quiet to
enjoy

Which virtue pictures, bitterness of
soul, 245

Pining regrets, and vain repentances,
Disease, disgust, and lassitude, pervade
Their valueless and miserable lives.

'But hoary-headed Selfishness has felt
Its death-blow, and is tottering to the
grave: 250

A brighter morn awaits the human
day,

When every transfer of earth's natural
gifts

Shall be a commerce of good words and
works;

When poverty and wealth, the thirst
of fame,

The fear of infamy, disease and woe,
War with its million horrors, and fierce
hell 256

Shall live but in the memory of Time,
Who, like a penitent libertine, shall
start,
Look back, and shudder at his younger
years.'

VI

ALL touch, all eye, all ear,
The Spirit felt the Fairy's burning
speech.

O'er the thin texture of its frame,
The varying periods painted changing
glows,

As on a summer even, 5
When soul-enfolding music floats
around,

The stainless mirror of the lake
Re-images the eastern gloom,
Mingling convulsively its purple hues
With sunset's burnished gold. 10

Then thus the Spirit spoke:
'It is a wild and miserable world!
Thorny, and full of care,
Which every fiend can make his prey
at will.

O Fairy! in the lapse of years, 15
Is there no hope in store?
Will yon vast suns roll on

Interminably, still illuming
The night of so many wretched souls,
And see no hope for them? 20

Will not the universal Spirit e'er
Revivify this withered limb of Heaven?'

The Fairy calmly smiled
In comfort, and a kindling gleam of
hope

Suffused the Spirit's lineaments. 25
'Oh! rest thee tranquil; chase those
fearful doubts,

Which ne'er could rack an everlasting
soul,

That sees the chains which bind it to
its doom.

Yes! crime and misery are in yonder
earth,

Falsehood, mistake, and lust; 30
But the eternal world

Contains at once the evil and the cure.
Some eminent in virtue shall start up,
Even in perversest time:

The truths of their pure lips, that never
die, 35
Shall bind the scorpion falsehood with
a wreath
Of ever-living flame,
Until the monster sting itself to death.

'How sweet a scene will earth be-
come!
Of purest spirits a pure dwelling-place,
Symphonious with the planetary
spheres; 41
When man, with changeless Nature
coalescing,
Will undertake regeneration's work,
When its ungenial poles no longer point
To the red and baleful sun 45
That faintly twinkles there.

'Spirit! on yonder earth,
Falsehood now triumphs; deadly
power
Has fixed its seal upon the lip of truth!
Madness and misery are there! 50
The happiest is most wretched! Yet
confide,
Until pure health-drops, from the cup
of joy,
Fall like a dew of balm upon the
world.
Now, to the scene I show, in silence
turn,
And read the blood-stained charter of
all woe, 55
Which Nature soon, with re-creating
hand,
Will blot in mercy from the book of
earth.
How bold the flight of Passion's wan-
dering wing,
How swift the step of Reason's firmer
tread,
How calm and sweet the victories of
life, 60
How terrorless the triumph of the
gravel
How powerless were the mightiest
monarch's arm,
Vain his loud threat, and impotent his
frown!

How ludicrous the priest's dogmatic
roar!
The weight of his exterminating curse:
How light! and his affected charity, 66
To suit the pressure of the changing
times,
What palpable deceit!—but for thy
aid,
Religion! but for thee, prolific fiend,
Who peoplest earth with demons, Hell
with men, 70
And Heaven with slaves!

'Thou taintest all thou look'st upon!—
the stars,
Which on thy cradle beamed so brightly
sweet,
Were gods to the distempered playfulness
Of thy untutored infancy: the trees, 75
The grass, the clouds, the mountains,
and the sea,
All living things that walk, swim,
creep, or fly,
Were gods: the sun had homage, and
the moon
Her worshipper. Then thou becam'st
a boy,
More daring in thy frenzies: every
shape, 80
Monstrous or vast, or beautifully wild,
Which, from sensation's relics, fancy
culls;
The spirits of the air, the shuddering
ghost,
The genii of the elements, the powers
That give a shape to Nature's varied
works, 85
Had life and place in the corrupt belief:
Of thy blind heart: yet still thy youth-
ful hands
Were pure of human blood. Then
manhood gave
Its strength and ardour to thy frenzied
brain;
Thine eager gaze scanned the stupen-
dous scene, 90
Whose wonders mocked the knowledge
of thy pride:
Their everlasting and unchanging laws

Reproached thine ignorance. Awhile
 thou stoodst
 Baffled and gloomy; then thou didst
 sum up
 The elements of all that thou didst
 know; 95
 The changing seasons, winter's leafless
 reign,
 The budding of the Heaven-breathing
 trees,
 The eternal orbs that beautify the
 night,
 The sunrise, and the setting of the
 moon,
 Earthquakes and wars, and poisons
 and disease, 100
 And all their causes, to an abstract
 point
 Converging, thou didst bend and called
 it God!
 The self-sufficing, the omnipotent,
 The merciful, and the avenging God!
 Who, prototype of human misrule,
 sits 105
 High in Heaven's realm, upon a golden
 throne,
 Even like an earthly king; and whose
 dread work,
 Hell, gapes for ever for the unhappy
 slaves
 Of fate, whom He created, in his sport,
 To triumph in their torments when
 they fell! 110
 Earth heard the name; Earth trembled,
 as the smoke
 Of His revenge ascended up to Heaven,
 Blotting the constellations; and the
 cries
 Of millions, butchered in sweet confi-
 dence
 And unsuspecting peace, even when
 the bonds 115
 Of safety were confirmed by wordy
 oaths
 Sworn in His dreadful name, rung
 through the land;
 Whilst innocent babes writhed on thy
 stubborn spear,
 And thou didst laugh to hear the
 mother's shriek

Of maniac gladness, as the sacred steel
 Felt cold in her torn entrails! 121
 'Religion! thou wert then in man-
 hood's prime:
 But age crept on: one God would not
 suffice
 For senile puerility; thou framedst
 A tale to suit thy dotage, and to glut
 Thy misery-thirsting soul, that the
 mad fiend 126
 Thy wickedness had pictured might
 afford
 A plea for sating the unnatural thirst
 For murder, rapine, violence, and
 crime,
 That still consumed thy being, even
 when 130
 Thou heardst the step of Fate;—that
 flames might light
 Thy funeral scene, and the shrill
 horrent shrieks
 Of parents dying on the pile that
 burned
 To light their children to thy paths,
 the roar
 Of the encircling flames, the exulting
 cries 135
 Of thine apostles, loud commingling
 there,
 Might sate thine hungry ear
 Even on the bed of death!
 'But now contempt is mocking thy
 gray hairs;
 Thou art descending to the darksome
 grave, 140
 Unhonoured and unpitied, but by
 those
 Whose pride is passing by like thine,
 and sheds,
 Like thine, a glare that fades before
 the sun
 Of truth, and shines but in the dread-
 ful night
 That long has lowered above the
 ruined world. 145
 'Throughout these infinite orbs of
 mingling light,
 Of which yon earth is one, is wide
 diffused

A Spirit of activity and life,
 That knows no term, cessation, or
 decay;
 That fades not when the lamp of
 earthly life, 150
 Extinguished in the dampness of the
 grave,
 Awhile there slumbers, more than when
 the babe
 In the dim newness of its being feels
 The impulses of sublunary things,
 And all is wonder to unpractised
 sense: 155
 But, active, steadfast, and eternal, still
 Guides the fierce whirlwind, in the
 tempest roars,
 Cheers in the day, breathes in the
 balmy groves,
 Strengthens in health, and poisons in
 disease;
 And in the storm of change, that cease-
 lessly 160
 Rolls round the eternal universe, and
 shakes
 Its undecaying battlement, presides,
 Apportioning with irresistible law
 The place each spring of its machine
 shall fill;
 So that when waves on waves tumul-
 tuous heap 165
 Confusion to the clouds, and fiercely
 driven
 Heaven's lightnings scorch the up-
 rooted ocean-fords,
 Whilst, to the eye of shipwrecked
 mariner,
 Lone sitting on the bare and shudder-
 ing rock,
 All seems unlinked contingency and
 chance: 170
 No atom of this turbulence fulfils
 A vague and unnecessitated task,
 Or acts but as it must and ought to act.
 Even the minutest molecule of light,
 That in an April sunbeam's fleeting
 glow 175
 Fulfils its destined, though invisible
 work,
 The universal Spirit guides; nor less,
 When merciless ambition, or mad zeal,

Has led two hosts of dupes to battle-
 field,
 That, blind, they there may dig each
 other's graves, 180
 And call the sad work glory, does it rule
 All passions: not a thought, a will, an
 act,
 No working of the tyrant's moody
 mind,
 Nor one misgiving of the slaves who
 boast
 Their servitude, to hide the shame
 they feel, 185
 Nor the events enchaining every will,
 That from the depths of unrecorded
 time
 Have drawn all-influencing virtue,
 pass
 Unrecognized, or unforeseen by thee,
 Soul of the Universe! eternal spring 190
 Of life and death, of happiness and
 woe,
 Of all that chequers the phantasmal
 scene
 That floats before our eyes in wavering
 light,
 Which gleams but on the darkness of
 our prison,
 Whose chains and massy walls 195
 We feel, but cannot see.
 'Spirit of Nature! all-sufficing Power,
 Necessity! thou mother of the world!
 Unlike the God of human error, thou
 Requir'st no prayers or praises; the
 caprice 200
 Of man's weak will belongs no more to
 thee
 Than do the changeful passions of his
 breast
 To thy unvarying harmony: the slave,
 Whose horrible lusts spread misery
 o'er the world,
 And the good man, who lifts, with
 virtuous pride, 205
 His being, in the sight of happiness,
 That springs from his own works; the
 poison-tree,
 Beneath whose shade all life is withered
 up,

And the fair oak, whose leafy dome
affords

A temple where the vows of happy
love 210

Are registered, are equal in thy sight:
No love, no hate thou cherishest;
revenge

And favouritism, and worst desire of
fame

Thou know'st not: all that the wide
world contains

Are but thy passive instruments, and
thou 215

Regard'st them all with an impartial
eye,

Whose joy or pain thy nature cannot
feel,

Because thou hast not human sense,
Because thou art not human mind.

'Yes! when the sweeping storm of
time 220

Has sung its death-dirge o'er the ruined
fanes

And broken altars of the almighty
Fiend

Whose name usurps thy honours, and
the blood

Through centuries clotted there, has
floated down

The tainted flood of ages, shalt thou
live 225

Unchangeable! A shrine is raised to
thee,

Which, nor the tempest-breath of
time,

Nor the interminable flood,
Over earth's slight pageant rolling,

Availeth to destroy,— 230

The sensitive extension of the world.

That wondrous and eternal fane,

Where pain and pleasure, good and evil
join,

To do the will of strong necessity,
And life, in multitudinous shapes, 235

Still pressing forward where no term
can be,

Like hungry and unresting flame
Curls round the eternal columns of its
strength.'

VII

Spirit.

'I WAS an infant when my mother went
To see an atheist burned. She took
me there:

The dark-robed priests were met
around the pile;

The multitude was gazing silently;
And as the culprit passed with daunt-
less mien, 5

Tempered disdain in his unaltering eye,
Mixed with a quiet smile, shone calmly
forth:

The thirsty fire crept round his manly
limbs;

His resolute eyes were scorched to
blindness soon;

His death-pang rent my heart! the
insensate mob 10

Uttered a cry of triumph, and I wept.
"Weep not, child!" cried my mother,
"for that man

Has said, There is no God."

Fairy.

'There is no God!

Nature confirms the faith his death-
groan sealed:

Let heaven and earth, let man's
revolving race, 15

His ceaseless generations tell their
tale;

Let every part depending on the chain
That links it to the whole, point to
the hand

That grasps its term! let every seed
that falls

In silent eloquence unfold its store 20
Of argument; infinity within,

Infinity without, belie creation;
The exterminable spirit it contains

Is nature's only God; but human
pride 24

Is skilful to invent most serious names
To hide its ignorance.

The name of God

Has fenced about all crime with
holiness,

Himself the creature of His wor-
shippers,

Whose names and attributes and
 passions change,
 Seeva, Buddh, Foh, Jehovah, God, or
 Lord, 30
 Even with the human dupes who build
 His shrines,
 Still serving o'er the war-polluted
 world
 For desolation's watchword; whether
 hosts
 Stain His death-blushing chariot-
 wheels, as on
 Triumphantly they roll, whilst Brah-
 mins raise 35
 A sacred hymn to mingle with the
 groans;
 Or countless partners of His power
 divide
 His tyranny to weakness; or the
 smoke
 Of burning towns, the cries of female
 helplessness,
 Unarmed old age, and youth, and
 infancy, 40
 Horribly massacred, ascend to Heaven
 In honour of His name; or, last and
 worst,
 Earth groans beneath religion's iron
 age,
 And priests dare babble of a God of
 peace,
 Even whilst their hands are red with
 guiltless blood, 45
 Murdering the while, uprooting every
 germ
 Of truth, exterminating, spoiling all,
 Making the earth a slaughter-house!

'O Spirit! through the sense
 By which thy inner nature was ap-
 prised 50
 Of outward shows, vague dreams
 have rolled,
 And varied reminiscences have waked
 Tablets that never fade;
 All things have been imprinted
 there,
 The stars, the sea, the earth, the sky,
 Even the unshapeliest lineaments 56
 Of wild and fleeting visions

Have left a record there
 To testify of earth.

'These are my empire, for to me is
 given 60
 The wonders of the human world to
 keep,
 And Fancy's thin creations to endow
 With manner, being, and reality;
 Therefore a wondrous phantom, from
 the dreams
 Of human error's dense and purblind
 faith, 65
 I will evoke, to meet thy questioning.
 Ahasuerus, rise!'

A strange and woe-worn wight
 Arose beside the battlement,
 And stood unmoving there. 70
 His inessential figure cast no shade
 Upon the golden floor;
 His port and mien bore mark of many
 years,
 And chronicles of untold ancientness
 Were legible within his beamless
 eye: 75
 Yet his cheek bore the mark of
 youth;
 Freshness and vigour knit his manly
 frame;
 The wisdom of old age was mingled
 there
 With youth's primaeval dauntless-
 ness;
 And inexpressible woe, 80
 Chastened by fearless resignation,
 gave
 An awful grace to his all-speaking
 brow.

Spirit.

'Is there a God?'

Ahasuerus.

'Is there a God!—ay, an almighty
 God,
 And vengeful as almighty! Once His
 voice 85
 Was heard on earth; earth shuddered
 at the sound;
 The fiery-visaged firmament expressed

Abhorrence, and the grave of Nature
 yawned
 To swallow all the dauntless and the
 good
 That dared to hurl defiance at His
 throne, 90
 Girt as it was with power. None but
 slaves
 Survived,—cold-blooded slaves, who
 did the work
 Of tyrannous omnipotence; whose
 souls
 No honest indignation ever urged
 To elevated daring, to one deed 95
 Which gross and sensual self did not
 pollute.
 These slaves built temples for the
 omnipotent Fiend,
 Gorgeous and vast: the costly altars
 smoked
 With human blood, and hideous paeans
 rung
 Through all the long-drawn aisles. A
 murderer heard 100
 His voice in Egypt, one whose gifts
 and arts
 Had raised him to his eminence in
 power,
 Accomplice of omnipotence in crime,
 And confidant of the all-knowing one.
 These were Jehovah's words:—

'From an eternity of idleness 106
 I, God, awoke; in seven days' toil
 made earth
 From nothing; rested, and created
 man:
 I placed him in a Paradise, and there
 Planted the tree of evil, so that he 110
 Might eat and perish, and My soul
 procure
 Wherewith to sate its malice, and to
 turn,
 Even like a heartless conqueror of the
 earth,
 All misery to My fame. The race of
 men
 Chosen to My honour, with impunity
 May sate the lusts I planted in their
 heart. 116

Here I command thee hence to lead
 them on,
 Until, with hardened feet, their con-
 quering troops
 Wade on the promised soil through
 woman's blood,
 And make My name be dreaded
 through the land. 120
 Yet ever-burning flame and ceaseless
 woe
 Shall be the doom of their eternal
 souls,
 With every soul on this ungrateful
 earth,
 Virtuous or vicious, weak or strong,—
 even all
 Shall perish, to fulfil the blind revenge
 (Which you, to men, call justice) of
 their God.' 126

The murderer's brow
 Quivered with horror.

'God omnipotent,
 Is there no mercy? must our punish-
 ment
 Be endless? will long ages roll away,
 And see no term? Oh! wherefore
 hast Thou made 131
 In mockery and wrath this evil earth?
 Mercy becomes the powerful—be but
 just:
 O God! repent and save.'

'One way remains:
 I will beget a Son, and He shall bear
 The sins of all the world; He shall
 arise 136
 In an unnoticed corner of the earth,
 And there shall die upon a cross, and
 purge
 The universal crime; so that the few
 On whom My grace descends, those
 who are marked 140
 As vessels to the honour of their
 God,
 May credit this strange sacrifice, and
 save
 Their souls alive: millions shall live
 and die,
 Who ne'er shall call upon their
 Saviour's name,

But, unredeemed, go to the gaping
grave. ¹⁴⁵

Thousands shall deem it an old
woman's tale,

Such as the nurses frighten babes
withal:

These in a gulf of anguish and of
flame

Shall curse their reprobation endlessly,
Yet tenfold pangs shall force them to

avow, ¹⁵⁰
Even on their beds of torment, where
they howl,

My honour, and the justice of their
doom.

What then avail their virtuous deeds,
their thoughts

Of purity, with radiant genius bright,
Or lit with human reason's earthly
ray? ¹⁵⁵

Many are called, but few will I elect.
Do thou My bidding, Moses!

Even the murderer's cheek
Was blanched with horror, and his
quivering lips

Scarce faintly uttered—'O almighty
One,

I tremble and obey!' ¹⁶⁰

'O Spirit! centuries have set their
seal

On this heart of many wounds, and
loaded brain,

Since the Incarnate came: humbly He
came,

Veiling His horrible Godhead in the
shape

Of man, scorned by the world, His
name unheard, ¹⁶⁵

Save by the rabble of His native town,
Even as a parish demagogue. He led

The crowd; He taught them justice,
truth, and peace,

In semblance; but He lit within their
souls

The quenchless flames of zeal, and
blessed the sword ¹⁷⁰

He brought on earth to satiate with
the blood

Of truth and freedom His malignant
soul.

At length His mortal frame was led to
death.

I stood beside Him: on the torturing
cross

No pain assailed His unterrestrial
sense; ¹⁷⁵

And yet He groaned. Indignantly I
summed

The massacres and miseries which His
name

Had sanctioned in my country, and I
cried,

"Go! Go!" in mockery.

A smile of godlike malice reillumed ¹⁸⁰
His fading lineaments.—"I go," He

cried,

"But thou shalt wander o'er the
unquiet earth

Eternally."—The dampness of the
grave

Bathed my imperishable front. I fell,
And long lay tranced upon the

charmèd soil. ¹⁸⁵
When I awoke Hell burned within my
brain,

Which staggered on its seat; for all
around

The mouldering relics of my kindred
lay,

Even as the Almighty's ire arrested
them,

And in their various attitudes of death
My murdered children's mute and eye-

less skulls ¹⁹⁰

Glared ghastly upon me.

But my soul,
From sight and sense of the polluting
woe

Of tyranny, had long learned to prefer
Hell's freedom to the servitude of

Heaven. ¹⁹⁵

Therefore I rose, and dauntlessly
began

My lonely and unending pilgrimage,
Resolved to wage unweariable war

With my almighty Tyrant, and to hurl

Defiance at His impotence to harm 200
Beyond the curse I bore. The very hand
That barred my passage to the peace-
ful grave

Has crushed the earth to misery, and
given

Its empire to the chosen of His slaves.
These have I seen, even from the
earliest dawn 205

Of weak, unstable and precarious
power,

Then preaching peace, as now they
practise war;

So, when they turned but from the
massacre

Of unoffending infidels, to quench
Their thirst for ruin in the very
blood 210

That flowed in their own veins, and
pitiless zeal

Froze every human feeling, as the wife
Sheathed in her husband's heart the
sacred steel,

Even whilst its hopes were dreaming
of her love;

And friends to friends, brothers to
brothers stood 215

Opposed in bloodiest battle-field, and
war,

Scarce satiable by fate's last death-
draught, waged,

Drunk from the winepress of the
Almighty's wrath;

Whilst the red cross, in mockery of
peace,

Pointed to victory! When the fray
was done, 220

No remnant of the exterminated faith
Survived to tell its ruin, but the flesh,

With putrid smoke poisoning the
atmosphere,

That rotted on the half-extinguished
pile.

'Yes! I have seen God's worshippers
unsheathe 225

The sword of His revenge, when grace
descended,

Confirming all unnatural impulses,
To sanctify their desolating deeds;

And frantic priests waved the ill-
omened cross

O'er the unhappy earth: then shone
the sun 230

On showers of gore from the upflash-
ing steel

Of safe assassination, and all crime
Made stingless by the Spirits of the
Lord,

And blood-red rainbows canopied the
land.

'Spirit, no year of my eventful being
Has passed unstained by crime and
misery, 236

Which flows from God's own faith.
I've marked His slaves

With tongues whose lies are venomous,
beguile

The insensate mob, and, whilst one
hand was red

With murder, feign to stretch the
other out 240

For brotherhood and peace; and that
they now

Babble of love and mercy, whilst their
deeds

Are marked with all the narrowness
and crime

That Freedom's young arm dare not
yet chastise,

Reason may claim our gratitude, who
now 245

Establishing the imperishable throne
Of truth, and stubborn virtue, maketh

vain

The unprevailing malice of my Foe,
Whose bootless rage heaps torments

for the brave,

Adds impotent eternities to pain, 250
Whilst keenest disappointment racks

His breast

To see the smiles of peace around them
play,

To frustrate or to sanctify their doom.

'Thus have I stood,—through a wild
waste of years
Struggling with whirlwinds of mad
agony, 255

Yet peaceful, and serene, and self-
enshrined,
Mocking my powerless Tyrant's horrible
curse

With stubborn and unalterable will,
Even as a giant oak, which Heaven's
fierce flame

Had scathèd in the wilderness, to stand
A monument of fadeless ruin there; ²⁶¹
Yet peacefully and movelessly it braves
The midnight conflict of the wintry
storm,

As in the sunlight's calm it spreads
Its worn and withered arms on high
To meet the quiet of a summer's noon.'

The Fairy waved her wand: ²⁶⁷
Ahasuerus fled

Fast as the shapes of mingled shade
and mist,

That lurk in the glens of a twilight
grove, ²⁷⁰

Flee from the morning beam:

The matter of which dreams are made
Not more endowed with actual life
Than this phantasmal portraiture
Of wandering human thought. ²⁷⁵

VIII

The Fairy.

'THE Present and the Past thou hast
beheld:

It was a desolate sight. Now, Spirit,
learn

The secrets of the Future.—Time!

Unfold the brooding pinion of thy
gloom,

Render thou up thy half-devoured
babes, ⁵

And from the cradles of eternity,

Where millions lie lulled to their
portioned sleep

By the deep murmuring stream of
passing things,

Tear thou that gloomy shroud.—Spirit,
behold

Thy glorious destiny!' ¹⁰

Joy to the Spirit came.

Through the wide rent in Time's eternal
veil,

Hope was seen beaming through the
mists of fear:

Earth was no longer Hell;

Love, freedom, health, had given
Their ripeness to the manhood of its
prime, ¹⁶

And all its pulses beat

Symphonious to the planetary spheres:
Then dulcet music swelled

Concordant with the life-strings of the
soul; ²⁰

It throbbed in sweet and languid beat-
ings there,

Catching new life from transitory
death,—

Like the vague sighings of a wind at
even,

That wakes the wavelets of the slumber-
ing sea

And dies on the creation of its breath,
And sinks and rises, fails and swells

by fits: ²⁶

Was the pure stream of feeling

That sprung from these sweet
notes,

And o'er the Spirit's human sympathies
With mild and gentle motion calmly
flowed. ³⁰

Joy to the Spirit came,—

Such joy as when a lover sees

The chosen of his soul in happiness,

And witnesses her peace

Whose woe to him were bitterer than
death, ³⁵

Sees her unfaded cheek

Glow mantling in first luxury of health,
Thrills with her lovely eyes,

Which like two stars amid the heaving
main

Sparkle through liquid bliss. ⁴⁰

Then in her triumph spoke the Fairy
Queen:

'I will not call the ghost of ages gone
To unfold the frightful secrets of its
lore;

The present now is past,
And those events that desolate the
earth ⁴⁵

Have faded from the memory of
Time,
Who dares not give reality to that
Whose being I annul. To me is given
The wonders of the human world to
keep,
Space, matter, time, and mind.
Futurity 50
Exposes now its treasure; let the sight
Renew and strengthen all thy failing
hope.
O human Spirit! spur thee to the goal
Where virtue fixes universal peace,
And midst the ebb and flow of human
things, 55
Show somewhat stable, somewhat
certain still,
A lighthouse o'er the wild of dreary
waves.
'The habitable earth is full of bliss;
Those wastes of frozen billows that
were hurled
By everlasting snowstorms round the
poles, 60
Where matter dared not vegetate or live,
But ceaseless frost round the vast
solitude
Bound its broad zone of stillness, are
unloosed;
And fragrant zephyrs there from spicy
isles
Ruffle the placid ocean-deep, that rolls
Its broad, bright surges to the sloping
sand, 66
Whose roar is wakened into echoings
sweet
To murmur through the Heaven-breath-
ing groves
And melodize with man's blest nature
there.
'Those deserts of immeasurable sand,
Whose age-collected fervours scarce
allowed 71
A bird to live, a blade of grass to
spring,
Where the shrill chirp of the green
lizard's love
Broke on the sultry silentness alone,

Now teem with countless rills and
shady woods, 75
Cornfields and pastures and white
cottages;
And where the startled wilderness be-
held
A savage conqueror stained in kindred
blood,
A tigress sating with the flesh of lambs
The unnatural famine of her toothless
cubs, 80
Whilst shouts and howlings through
the desert rang,
Sloping and smooth the daisy-spangled
lawn,
Offering sweet incense to the sunrise,
smiles
To see a babe before his mother's
door,
Sharing his morning's meal 85
With the green and golden basilisk
That comes to lick his feet.
'Those trackless deeps, where many a
weary sail
Has seen above the illimitable plain,
Morning on night, and night on morn-
ing rise, 90
Whilst still no land to greet the
wanderer spread
Its shadowy mountains on the sun-
bright sea,
Where the loud roarings of the
tempest-waves
So long have mingled with the gusty
wind
In melancholy loneliness, and swept 95
The desert of those ocean solitudes,
But vocal to the sea-bird's harrowing
shriek,
The bellowing monster, and the rush-
ing storm,
Now to the sweet and many-mingling
sounds
Of kindest human impulses respond.
Those lonely realms bright garden-isles
begem, 101
With lightsome clouds and shining seas
between,
And fertile valleys, resonant with bliss,

Whilst green woods overcanopy the
wave,
Which like a toil-worn labourer leaps
to shore, ¹⁰⁵
To meet the kisses of the flow'rets there.

'All things are recreated, and the flame
Of consentaneous love inspires all life:
The fertile bosom of the earth gives
suck

To myriads, who still grow beneath her
care, ¹¹⁰

Rewarding her with their pure perfect-
ness:

The balmy breathings of the wind
inhale

Her virtues, and diffuse them all
abroad:

Health floats amid the gentle atmo-
sphere,

Glow in the fruits, and mantles on the
stream: ¹¹⁵

No storms deform the beaming brow
of Heaven,

Nor scatter in the freshness of its
pride

The foliage of the ever-verdant trees;
But fruits are ever ripe, flowers ever
fair,

And Autumn proudly bears her matron
grace, ¹²⁰

Kindling a flush on the fair cheek of
Spring,

Whose virgin bloom beneath the ruddy
fruit

Reflects its tint, and blushes into love.

'The lion now forgets to thirst for
blood:

There might you see him sporting in
the sun ¹²⁵

Beside the dreadless kid; his claws
are sheathed,

His teeth are harmless, custom's force
has made

His nature as the nature of a lamb.

Like passion's fruit, the nightshade's
tempting bane

Poisons no more the pleasure it be-
stows: ¹³⁰

All bitterness is past; the cup of joy
Unmingled mantles to the goblet's
brim,
And courts the thirsty lips it fled
before.

'But chief, ambiguous Man, he that
can know

More misery, and dream more joy than
all; ¹³⁵

Whose keen sensations thrill within his
breast

To mingle with a loftier instinct there,
Lending their power to pleasure and to
pain,

Yet raising, sharpening, and refining
each;

Who stands amid the ever-varying
world, ¹⁴⁰

The burthen or the glory of the earth;
He chief perceives the change, his
being notes

The gradual renovation, and defines
Each movement of its progress on his
mind.

'Man, where the gloom of the long
polar night ¹⁴⁵

Lowers o'er the snow-clad rocks and
frozen soil,

Where scarce the hardiest herb that
braves the frost

Basks in the moonlight's ineffectual
glow,

Shrank with the plants, and darkened
with the night;

His chilled and narrow energies, his
heart, ¹⁵⁰

Insensible to courage, truth, or love,
His stunted stature and imbecile
frame,

Marked him for some abortion of the
earth,

Fit compeer of the bears that roamed
around,

Whose habits and enjoyments were his
own: ¹⁵⁵

His life a feverish dream of stagnant
woe,

Whose meagre wants, but scantily ful-
filled,

Apprised him ever of the joyless length
 Which his short being's wretchedness
 had reached;
 His death a pang which famine, cold
 and toil 160
 Long on the mind, whilst yet the vital
 spark
 Clung to the body stubbornly, had
 brought:
 All was inflicted here that Earth's
 revenge
 Could wreak on the infringers of her
 law;
 One curse alone was spared—the name
 of God. 165

'Nor where the tropics bound the
 realms of day
 With a broad belt of mingling cloud
 and flame,
 Where blue mists through the unmov-
 ing atmosphere
 Scattered the seeds of pestilence, and
 fed
 Unnatural vegetation, where the land
 Teemed with all earthquake, tempest
 and disease, 171
 Was Man a nobler being; slavery
 Had crushed him to his country's blood-
 stained dust;
 Or he was bartered for the fame of power,
 Which all internal impulses destroying,
 Makes human will an article of trade;
 Or he was changed with Christians for
 their gold, 177
 And dragged to distant isles, where to
 the sound
 Of the flesh-mangling scourge, he does
 the work
 Of all-polluting luxury and wealth, 180
 Which doubly visits on the tyrants'
 heads
 The long-protracted fulness of their
 woe;
 Or he was led to legal butchery,
 To turn to worms beneath that burning
 sun,
 Where kings first leagued against the
 rights of men, 185
204 exhaustless store *ed. 1813.*

And priests first traded with the name
 of God.

'Even where the milder zone afforded
 Man
 A seeming shelter, yet contagion there,
 Blighting his being with unnumbered
 ills,
 Spread like a quenchless fire; nor truth
 till late 190
 Availed to arrest its progress, or create
 That peace which first in bloodless
 victory waved
 Her snowy standard o'er this favoured
 clime:
 There man was long the train-bearer of
 slaves,
 The mimic of surrounding misery, 195
 The jackal of ambition's lion-rage,
 The bloodhound of religion's hungry
 zeal.

'Here now the human being stands
 adorning
 This loveliest earth with taintless body
 and mind;
 Blessed from his birth with all bland
 impulses, 200
 Which gently in his noble bosom wake
 All kindly passions and all pure de-
 sires.
 Him, still from hope to hope the bliss
 pursuing
 Which from the exhaustless lore of
 human weal
 Dawns on the virtuous mind, the
 thoughts that rise 205
 In time-destroying infiniteness, gift
 With self-enshrined eternity, that
 mocks
 The unprevailing hoariness of age,
 And man, once fleeting o'er the tran-
 sient scene
 Swift as an unremembered vision,
 stands 210
 Immortal upon earth: no longer now
 He slays the lamb that looks him in
 the face,
 And horribly devours his mangled flesh,
205 Draws *ed. 1813. See Editor's Note.*

Which, still avenging Nature's broken
law,
Kindled all putrid humours in his
frame, 215
All evil passions, and all vain belief,
Hatred, despair, and loathing in his
mind,
The germs of misery, death, disease,
and crime.
No longer now the wingèd habitants,
That in the woods their sweet lives sing
away, 220
Flee from the form of man; but gather
round,
And prune their sunny feathers on the
hands
Which little children stretch in friendly
sport
Towards these dreadless partners of
their play.
All things are void of terror: Man has
lost 225
His terrible prerogative, and stands
An equal amidst equals: happiness
And science dawn though late upon
the earth;
Peace cheers the mind, health reno-
vates the frame;
Disease and pleasure cease to mingle
here, 230
Reason and passion cease to combat
there;
Whilst each unfettered o'er the earth
extend
Their all-subduing energies, and wield
The sceptre of a vast dominion there;
Whilst every shape and mode of matter
lends 235
Its force to the omnipotence of mind,
Which from its dark mine drags the
gem of truth
To decorate its Paradise of peace.'

IX

'O HAPPY Earth! reality of Heaven!
To which those restless souls that
ceaselessly
Throng through the human universe,
aspire;

Thou consummation of all mortal hope!
Thou glorious prize of blindly-working
will! 5
Whose rays, diffused throughout all
space and time,
Verge to one point and blend for ever
there:
Of purest spirits thou pure dwelling-
place!
Where care and sorrow, impotence and
crime,
Languor, disease, and ignorance dare
not come: 10
O happy Earth, reality of Heaven!

'Genius has seen thee in her passionate
dreams,
And dim forebodings of thy loveliness
Haunting the human heart, have there
entwined
Those rooted hopes of some sweet place
of bliss 15
Where friends and lovers meet to part
no more.
Thou art the end of all desire and
will,
The product of all action; and the
souls
That by the paths of an aspiring change
Have reached thy haven of perpetual
peace, 20
There rest from the eternity of toil
That framed the fabric of thy perfect-
ness.

'Even Time, the conqueror, fled thee
in his fear;
That hoary giant, who, in lonely pride,
So long had ruled the world, that
nations fell 25
Beneath his silent footstep. Pyramids,
That for millenniums had withstood
the tide
Of human things, his storm-breath
drove in sand
Across that desert where their stones
survived
The name of him whose pride had
heaped them there. 30
Yon monarch, in his solitary pomp,

Was but the mushroom of a summer
day,
That his light-wingèd footstep pressed
to dust:
Time was the king of earth: all things
gave way
Before him, but the fixed and virtuous
will, 35
The sacred sympathies of soul and
sense,
That mocked his fury and prepared his
fall.

'Yet slow and gradual dawned the morn
of love;
Long lay the clouds of darkness o'er
the scene,
Till from its native Heaven they rolled
away: 40
First, Crime triumphant o'er all hope
careered
Unblushing, undisguising, bold and
strong;
Whilst Falsehood, tricked in Virtue's
attributes,
Long sanctified all deeds of vice and
woe,
Till done by her own venomous sting
to death, 45
She left the moral world without a
law,
No longer fettering Passion's fearless
wing,
Nor searing Reason with the brand of
God.
Then steadily the happy ferment
worked;
Reason was free; and wild though
Passion went 50
Through tangled glens and wood-em-
bosomed meads,
Gathering a garland of the strangest
flowers,
Yet like the bee returning to her queen,
She bound the sweetest on her sister's
brow,
Who meek and sober kissed the sport-
ive child, 55
No longer trembling at the broken
rod.

'Mild was the slow necessity of death:
The tranquil spirit failed beneath its
grasp,
Without a groan, almost without a fear,
Calm as a voyager to some distant
land, 60
And full of wonder, full of hope as he.
The deadly germs of languor and
disease
Died in the human frame, and Purity
Blessed with all gifts her earthly wor-
shippers.
How vigorous then the athletic form of
age! 65
How clear its open and unwrinkled
brow!
Where neither avarice, cunning, pride,
nor care,
Had stamped the seal of gray deformity
On all the mingling lineaments of time.
How lovely the intrepid front of youth!
Which meek-eyed courage decked with
freshest grace; 71
Courage of soul, that dreaded not a
name,
And elevated will, that journeyed on
Through life's phantasmal scene in
fearlessness,
With virtue, love, and pleasure, hand
in hand.
'Then, that sweet bondage which is
Freedom's self,
And rivets with sensation's softest tie
The kindred sympathies of human
souls,
Needed no fetters of tyrannic law:
Those delicate and timid impulses 80
In Nature's primal modesty arose,
And with undoubted confidence dis-
closed
The growing longings of its dawning
love,
Unchecked by dull and selfish chastity,
That virtue of the cheaply virtuous, 85
Who pride themselves in senselessness
and frost.
No longer prostitution's venomous bane
Poisoned the springs of happiness and
life;

Woman and man, in confidence and
love,
Equal and free and pure together trod
The mountain-paths of virtue, which
no more 91
Were stained with blood from many a
pilgrim's feet.

'Then, where, through distant ages,
long in pride
The palace of the monarch-slave had
mocked
Famine's faint groan, and Penury's
silent tear, 95
A heap of crumbling ruins stood, and
threw
Year after year their stones upon the
field,
Wakening a lonely echo; and the leaves
Of the old thorn, that on the topmost
tower
Usurped the royal ensign's grandeur,
shook 100
In the stern storm that swayed the
topmost tower
And whispered strange tales in the
Whirlwind's ear.

'Low through the lone cathedral's
roofless aisles
The melancholy winds a death-dirge
sung:
It were a sight of awfulness to see 105
The works of faith and slavery, so
vast,
So sumptuous, yet so perishing withal!
Even as the corpse that rests beneath
its wall.
A thousand mourners deck the pomp
of death
To-day, the breathing marble glows
above 110
To decorate its memory, and tongues
Are busy of its life: to-morrow, worms
In silence and in darkness seize their
prey.

'Within the massy prison's mouldering
courts,
Fearless and free the ruddy children
played, 115

Weaving gay chaplets for their inno-
cent brows
With the green ivy and the red wall-
flower,
That mock the dungeon's unavailing
gloom;
The ponderous chains, and gratings of
strong iron,
There rusted amid heaps of broken
stone 120
That mingled slowly with their native
earth:
There the broad beam of day, which
feebly once
Lighted the cheek of lean Captivity
With a pale and sickly glare, then
freely shone
On the pure smiles of infant playfulness:
125
No more the shuddering voice of hoarse
Despair
Pealed through the echoing vaults, but
soothing notes
Of ivy-fingered winds and gladsome
birds
And merriment were resonant around.
'These ruins soon left not a wreck
behind: 130
Their elements, wide scattered o'er the
globe,
To happier shapes were moulded, and
became
Ministrant to all blissful impulses:
Thus human things were perfected,
and earth,
Even as a child beneath its mother's
love, 135
Was strengthened in all excellence,
and grew
Fairer and nobler with each passing
year.
'Now Time his dusky pennons o'er the
scene
Closes in steadfast darkness, and the
past
Fades from our charmed sight. My
task is done: 140
Thy lore is learned. Earth's wonders
are thine own,

With all the fear and all the hope they bring.

My spells are passed: the present now recurs.

Ah me! a pathless wilderness remains
Yet unsubdued by man's reclaiming hand. 145

'Yet, human Spirit, bravely hold thy course,

Let virtue teach thee firmly to pursue
The gradual paths of an aspiring change:

For birth and life and death, and that strange state

Before the naked soul has found its home, 150

All tend to perfect happiness, and urge
The restless wheels of being on their way,

Whose flashing spokes, instinct with infinite life,

Bicker and burn to gain their destined goal:

For birth but wakes the spirit to the sense 155

Of outward shows, whose unexperienced shape

New modes of passion to its frame may lend;

Life is its state of action, and the store
Of all events is aggregated there 159

That variegate the eternal universe;
Death is a gate of dreariness and gloom,

That leads to azure isles and beaming skies

And happy regions of eternal hope.

Therefore, O Spirit! fearlessly bear on:

Though storms may break the primrose
on its stalk, 165

Though frosts may blight the freshness
of its bloom,

Yet Spring's awakening breath will woo the earth,

To feed with kindest dews its favourite flower,

That blooms in mossy banks and dark-
some glens,

Lighting the greenwood with its sunny smile. 170

'Fear not then, Spirit, Death's dis-
robing hand,

So welcome when the tyrant is awake,
So welcome when the bigot's hell-torch
burns;

'Tis but the voyage of a darksome
hour,

The transient gulf-dream of a start-
ling sleep. 175

Death is no foe to Virtue: earth has
seen

Love's brightest roses on the scaffold
bloom,

Mingling with Freedom's fadeless
laurels there,

And presaging the truth of visioned
bliss.

Are there not hopes within thee, which
this scene 180

Of linked and gradual being has con-
firmed?

Whose stings bade thy heart look
further still,

When, to the moonlight walk by Henry
led,

Sweetly and sadly thou didst talk of
death?

And wilt thou rudely tear them from
thy breast, 185

Listening supinely to a bigot's creed,
Or tamely crouching to the tyrant's

rod,

Whose iron thongs are red with human
gore?

Never: but bravely bearing on, thy will
Is destined an eternal war to wage 190

With tyranny and falsehood, and
uproot

The germs of misery from the human
heart.

Thine is the hand whose piety would
soothe

The thorny pillow of unhappy crime,
Whose impotence an easy pardon gains,

Watching its wanderings as a friend's
disease: 196

Thine is the brow whose mildness
would defy

Its fiercest rage, and brave its sternest
will,

When fenced by power and master of
the world.
Thou art sincere and good; of resolute
mind, 200
Free from heart-withering custom's
cold control,
Of passion lofty, pure and unsubdued.
Earth's pride and meanness could not
vanquish thee,
And therefore art thou worthy of the
boon
Which thou hast now received: Virtue
shall keep 205
Thy footsteps in the path that thou
hast trod,
And many days of beaming hope shall
bless
Thy spotless life of sweet and sacred
love.
Go, happy one, and give that bosom joy
Whose sleepless spirit waits to catch
Light, life and rapture from thy
smile.' 211
The Fairy waves her wand of charm.
Speechless with bliss the Spirit mounts
the car,
That rolled beside the battlement,
Bending her beamy eyes in thankful-
ness. 215
Again the enchanted steeds were
yoked,
Again the burning wheels inflame
The steep descent of Heaven's un-
trodden way.

Fast and far the chariot flew:
The vast and fiery globes that rolled
Around the Fairy's palace-gate 221
Lessened by slow degrees and soon
appeared
Such tiny twinklers as the planet orbs
That there attendant on the solar power
With borrowed light pursued their
narrower way. 225

Earth floated then below:
The chariot paused a moment there;
The Spirit then descended:
The restless coursers pawed the un-
genial soil,
Snuffed the gross air, and then, their
errand done, 230
Unfurled their pinions to the winds of
Heaven.

The Body and the Soul united
then,
A gentle start convulsed Ianthé's
frame:
Her veiny eyelids quietly unclosed;
Moveless awhile the dark blue orbs
remained: 235
She looked around in wonder and
beheld
Henry, who kneeled in silence by her
couch,
Watching her sleep with looks of
speechless love,
And the bright beaming stars 239
That through the casement shone.

NOTES ON QUEEN MAB

SHELLEY'S NOTES

I. 242, 243:—

*The sun's unclouded orb
Rolled through the black concave.*

BEYOND our atmosphere the sun would appear a rayless orb of fire in the midst of a black concave. The equal diffusion of its light on earth is owing to the refraction of the rays by the atmosphere, and their reflection from other bodies. Light consists either of vibra-

tions propagated through a subtle medium, or of numerous minute particles repelled in all directions from the luminous body. Its velocity greatly exceeds that of any substance with which we are acquainted: observations on the eclipses of Jupiter's satellites have demonstrated that light takes up no more than 8' 7" in passing from the sun to the earth, a distance of 95,000,000 miles.—Some idea may be gained of the immense distance of the

fixed stars when it is computed that many years would elapse before light could reach this earth from the nearest of them; yet in one year light travels 5,422,400,000,000 miles, which is a distance 5,707,600 times greater than that of the sun from the earth.

I. 252, 253:—

*Whilst round the chariot's way
Innumerable systems rolled.*

The plurality of worlds,—the indefinite immensity of the universe, is a most awful subject of contemplation. He who rightly feels its mystery and grandeur is in no danger of seduction from the falsehoods of religious systems, or of deifying the principle of the universe. It is impossible to believe that the Spirit that pervades this infinite machine begat a son upon the body of a Jewish woman; or is angered at the consequences of that necessity, which is a synonym of itself. All that miserable tale of the Devil, and Eve, and an Intercessor, with the childish mummeries of the God of the Jews, is irreconcilable with the knowledge of the stars. The works of His fingers have borne witness against Him.

The nearest of the fixed stars is inconceivably distant from the earth, and they are probably proportionably distant from each other. By a calculation of the velocity of light, Sirius is supposed to be at least 54,224,000,000,000 miles from the earth¹. That which appears only like a thin and silvery cloud streaking the heaven is in effect composed of innumerable clusters of suns, each shining with its own light, and illuminating numbers of planets that revolve around them. Millions and millions of suns are ranged around us, all attended by innumerable worlds, yet calm, regular, and harmonious, all keeping the paths of immutable necessity.

IV. 178, 179:—

*These are the hired bravos who defend
The tyrant's throne.*

To employ murder as a means of justice is an idea which a man of an enlightened mind will not dwell upon with pleasure. To march forth in rank and file, and all the pomp of streamers and trumpets, for the purpose of shooting at our fellow-men as a mark; to inflict upon them all the variety of wound and anguish; to leave them weltering in their blood; to wander over the field of desolation, and count the number of the dying and the dead,—are employments which in thesis we may maintain to be necessary, but which no good man will contemplate with gratulation and delight. A battle we suppose is won:—thus truth is established, thus the cause of justice is confirmed! It surely requires no common sagacity to discern the connection between this immense heap of calamities and the assertion of truth or the maintenance of justice.

'Kings, and ministers of state, the real authors of the calamity, sit unmolested in their cabinet, while those against whom the fury of the storm is directed are, for the most part, persons who have been trepanned into the service, or who are dragged unwillingly from their peaceful homes into the field of battle. A soldier is a man whose business it is to kill those who never offended him, and who are the innocent martyrs of other men's iniquities. Whatever may become of the abstract question of the justifiableness of war, it seems impossible that the soldier should not be a depraved and unnatural being.

To these more serious and momentous considerations it may be proper to add a recollection of the ridiculousness of the military character. Its first constituent is obedience: a soldier is,

¹ See Nicholson's *Encyclopedia*, art. Light.

of all descriptions of men, the most completely a machine; yet his profession inevitably teaches him something of dogmatism, swaggering, and self-consequence: he is like the puppet of a showman, who, at the very time he is made to strut and swell and display the most farcical airs, we perfectly know cannot assume the most insignificant gesture, advance either to the right or the left, but as he is moved by his exhibitor.'—Godwin's *Enquirer*, Essay v.

I will here subjoin a little poem, so strongly expressive of my abhorrence of despotism and falsehood, that I fear lest it never again may be depicted so vividly. This opportunity is perhaps the only one that ever will occur of rescuing it from oblivion.

FALSEHOOD AND VICE

A DIALOGUE

WHILST monarchs laughed upon their
thrones

To hear a famished nation's groans,
And hugged the wealth wrung from
the woe

That makes its eyes and veins o'er-
flow,—

Those thrones, high built upon the
heaps

Of bones where frenzied Famine sleeps,
Where Slavery wields her scourge of
iron,

Red with mankind's unheeded gore,
And War's mad fiends the scene environ,
Mingling with shrieks a drunken roar,
There Vice and Falsehood took their
stand,

High raised above the unhappy land.

Falsehood.

Brother! arise from the dainty fare,
Which thousands have toiled and bled
to bestow;

A finer feast for thy hungry ear
Is the news that I bring of human
woe.

Vice.

And, secret one, what hast thou done,
To compare, in thy tumid pride, with
me?

I, whose career, through the blasted
year,

Has been tracked by despair and agony.

Falsehood.

What have I done!—I have torn the
robe

From baby Truth's unsheltered form,
And round the desolated globe

Borne safely the bewildering charm:

My tyrant-slaves to a dungeon-floor

Have bound the fearless innocent,

And streams of fertilizing gore

Flow from her bosom's hideous rent,

Which this unfailing dagger gave. . . .

I dread that blood!—no more—this day

Is ours, though her eternal ray

Must shine upon our grave.

Yet know, proud Vice, had I not given

To thee the robe I stole from Heaven,

Thy shape of ugliness and fear

Had never gained admission here.

Vice.

And know, that had I disdained to toil,
But sate in my loathsome cave the
while,

And ne'er to these hateful sons of
Heaven,

GOLD, MONARCHY, and MURDER,
given;

Hadst thou with all thine art essayed

One of thy games then to have played,

With all thine overweening boast,

Falsehood! I tell thee thou hadst
lost!—

Yet wherefore this dispute?—we tend,
Fraternal, to one common end;

In this cold grave beneath my feet,

Will our hopes, our fears, and our
labours, meet.

Falsehood.

I brought my daughter, RELIGION,
on earth:

She smothered Reason's babes in their
birth;

But dreaded their mother's eye
severe,—

So the crocodile slunk off slily in fear,
And loosed her bloodhounds from the
den. . . .

They started from dreams of slaughtered
men,

And, by the light of her poison eye,
Did her work o'er the wide earth
frightfully:

The dreadful stench of her torches'
flare,

Fed with human fat, polluted the air:
The curses, the shrieks, the ceaseless
cries

Of the many-mingling miseries
As on she trod, ascended high
And trumpeted my victory!—
Brother, tell what thou hast done.

Vice.

I have extinguished the noonday sun,
In the carnage-smoke of battles won:
Famine, Murder, Hell and Power
Were glutted in that glorious hour
Which searchless fate had stamped for
me

With the seal of her security. . . .
For the bloated wretch on yonder
throne

Commanded the bloody fray to rise.
Like me he joyed at the stifed moan
Wrung from a nation's miseries;
While the snakes, whose slime even
him *defiled*,

In ecstasies of malice smiled:
They thought 'twas theirs,—but mine
the deed!

Theirs is the toil, but mine the meed—
Ten thousand victims madly bleed.
They dream that tyrants goad them
there

With poisonous war to taint the air:
These tyrants, on their beds of thorn,
Swell with the thoughts of murderous
fame,

And with their gains to lift my name
Restless they plan from night to morn:
I—I do all; without my aid
Thy daughter, that relentless maid,

Could never o'er a death-bed urge
The fury of her venom'd scourge.

Falsehood.

Brother, well:—the world is ours;
And whether thou or I have won,
The pestilence expectant lowers
On all beneath yon blasted sun.
Our joys, our toils, our honours meet
In the milk-white and wormy winding-
sheet:

A short-lived hope, unceasing care,
Some heartless scraps of godly prayer,
A moody curse, and a frenzied sleep
Ere gapes the grave's unclosing deep,
A tyrant's dream, a coward's start,
The ice that clings to a priestly heart,
A judge's frown, a courtier's smile,
Make the great whole for which we toil;
And, brother, whether thou or I
Have done the work of misery,
It little boots: thy toil and pain,
Without my aid, were more than vain;
And but for thee I ne'er had sate
The guardian of Heaven's palace gate.

V. I, 2:—

*Thus do the generations of the earth
Go to the grave, and issue from the womb.*

'One generation passeth away, and
another generation cometh; but the
earth abideth for ever. The sun also
ariseth, and the sun goeth down, and
hasteth to his place where he arose.
The wind goeth toward the south, and
turneth about unto the north; it
whirleth about continually, and the
wind returneth again according to his
circuits. All the rivers run into the
sea; yet the sea is not full; unto the
place from whence the rivers come,
thither they return again.'—*Eccles-
iastes*, chap. i. vv. 4-7.

V. 4-6:—

Even as the leaves

*Which the keen frost-wind of the waning
year*

Has scattered on the forest soil.

Οἷη περ φύλλων γενεή, τοιήδε καὶ
ἀνδρῶν.

Φύλλα τὰ μὲν τ' ἀνεμος χαμάδις χέει,
 ἄλλα δέ θ' ὕλη
 Τηλεθώουσα φύει, ἔαρος δ' ἐπιγίγνεται
 ὥρη.
 Ὡς ἀνδρῶν γενεή, ἣ μὲν φύει, ἣ δ'
 ἀπολήγει.

IIAD. Z, l. 146.

v. 58:—

*The mob of peasants, nobles, priests, and
 kings.*

Suave mari magno turbantibus aequora
 ventis

E terra magnum alterius spectare
 laborem;

Non quia vexari quemquam est iucunda
 voluptas,

Sed quibus ipse malis careas quia
 cernere suave est.

Suave etiam bellicertamina magnatueri
 Per campos instructa, tua sine parte
 pericli;

Sed nil dulcius est bene quam munita
 tenere

Edita doctrina sapientum templa
 serena,

Despicere unde queas alios, passimque
 videre

Errare atque viam palantis quaerere
 vitae;

Certare ingenio; contendere nobili-
 tate;

Noctes atque dies niti praestante
 labore

Ad summas emergere opes, rerumque
 potiri.

O miseras hominum mentes! O pectora
 caeca!

Lucret. lib. ii.

v. 93, 94:—

And statesmen boast

Of wealth!

There is no real wealth but the labour of man. Were the mountains of gold and the valleys of silver, the world would not be one grain of corn the richer; no one comfort would be added to the human race. In consequence of our consideration for the

precious metals, one man is enabled to heap to himself luxuries at the expense of the necessities of his neighbour; a system admirably fitted to produce all the varieties of disease and crime, which never fail to characterize the two extremes of opulence and penury. A speculator takes pride to himself as the promoter of his country's prosperity, who employs a number of hands in the manufacture of articles avowedly destitute of use, or subservient only to the unhallowed cravings of luxury and ostentation. The nobleman, who employs the peasants of his neighbourhood in building his palaces, until '*jam pauca aratro jugera regiae moles relinquunt*,' flatters himself that he has gained the title of a patriot by yielding to the impulses of vanity. The show and pomp of courts adduce the same apology for its continuance; and many a fête has been given, many a woman has eclipsed her beauty by her dress, to benefit the labouring poor and to encourage trade. Who does not see that this is a remedy which aggravates whilst it palliates the countless diseases of society? The poor are set to labour, —for what? Not the food for which they famish: not the blankets for want of which their babes are frozen by the cold of their miserable hovels: not those comforts of civilization without which civilized man is far more miserable than the meanest savage; oppressed as he is by all its insidious evils, within the daily and taunting prospect of its innumerable benefits assiduously exhibited before him: —no; for the pride of power, for the miserable isolation of pride, for the false pleasures of the hundredth part of society. No greater evidence is afforded of the wide extended and radical mistakes of civilized man than this fact: those arts which are essential to his very being are held in the greatest contempt; employments are lucrative in an inverse ratio to their

usefulness¹: the jeweller, the toyman, the actor gains fame and wealth by the exercise of his useless and ridiculous art; whilst the cultivator of the earth, he without whom society must cease to subsist, struggles through contempt and penury, and perishes by that famine which but for his unceasing exertions would annihilate the rest of mankind.

I will not insult common sense by insisting on the doctrine of the natural equality of man. The question is not concerning its desirableness, but its practicability: so far as it is practicable, it is desirable. That state of human society which approaches nearer to an equal partition of its benefits and evils should, *cæteris paribus*, be preferred: but so long as we conceive that a wanton expenditure of human labour, not for the necessities, not even for the luxuries of the mass of society, but for the egotism and ostentation of a few of its members, is defensible on the ground of public justice, so long we neglect to approximate to the redemption of the human race.

Labour is required for physical, and leisure for moral improvement: from the former of these advantages the rich, and from the latter the poor, by the inevitable conditions of their respective situations, are precluded. A state which should combine the advantages of both would be subjected to the evils of neither. He that is deficient in firm health, or vigorous intellect, is but half a man: hence it follows that to subject the labouring classes to unnecessary labour is wantonly depriving them of any opportunities of intellectual improvement; and that the rich are heaping up for their own mischief the disease, lassitude, and ennui by which their existence is rendered an intolerable burthen.

English reformers exclaim against sinecures,—but the true pension list

is the rent-roll of the landed proprietors: wealth is a power usurped by the few, to compel the many to labour for their benefit. The laws which support this system derive their force from the ignorance and credulity of its victims: they are the result of a conspiracy of the few against the many, who are themselves obliged to purchase this pre-eminence by the loss of all real comfort.

‘The commodities that substantially contribute to the subsistence of the human species form a very short catalogue: they demand from us but a slender portion of industry. If these only were produced, and sufficiently produced, the species of man would be continued. If the labour necessarily required to produce them were equitably divided among the poor, and, still more, if it were equitably divided among all, each man’s share of labour would be light, and his portion of leisure would be ample. There was a time when this leisure would have been of small comparative value: it is to be hoped that the time will come when it will be applied to the most important purposes. Those hours which are not required for the production of the necessities of life may be devoted to the cultivation of the understanding, the enlarging our stock of knowledge, the refining our taste, and thus opening to us new and more exquisite sources of enjoyment.

‘It was perhaps necessary that a period of monopoly and oppression should subsist, before a period of cultivated equality could subsist. Savages perhaps would never have been excited to the discovery of truth and the invention of art but by the narrow motives which such a period affords. But surely, after the savage state has ceased, and men have set out in the glorious career of discovery and

¹ See Rousseau, *De l’Inégalité parmi les Hommes*, note “.

invention, monopoly and oppression cannot be necessary to prevent them from returning to a state of barbarism.'—Godwin's *Enquirer*, Essay ii. See also *Pol. Jus.*, book VIII, chap. ii.

It is a calculation of this admirable author, that all the conveniences of civilized life might be produced, if society would divide the labour equally among its members, by each individual being employed in labour two hours during the day.

V. 112, 113:—

or religion

Drives his wife raving mad.

I am acquainted with a lady of considerable accomplishments, and the mother of a numerous family, whom the Christian religion has goaded to incurable insanity. A parallel case is, I believe, within the experience of every physician.

Nam iam saepe homines patriam,
carosque parentes

Proderunt, vitare Acherusia templa
petentes. *Lucretius.*

v. 189:—

Even love is sold.

Not even the intercourse of the sexes is exempt from the despotism of positive institution. Law pretends even to govern the indisciplinable wanderings of passion, to put fetters on the clearest deductions of reason, and, by appeals to the will, to subdue the involuntary affections of our nature. Love is inevitably consequent upon the perception of loveliness. Love withers under constraint: its very essence is liberty: it is compatible neither with obedience, jealousy, nor fear: it is there most pure, perfect, and un-

limited, where its votaries live in confidence, equality, and unreserve.

How long then ought the sexual connection to last? what law ought to specify the extent of the grievances which should limit its duration? A husband and wife ought to continue so long united as they love each other: any law which should bind them to cohabitation for one moment after the decay of their affection would be a most intolerable tyranny, and the most unworthy of toleration. How odious an usurpation of the right of private judgement should that law be considered which should make the ties of friendship indissoluble, in spite of the caprices, the inconstancy, the fallibility, and capacity for improvement of the human mind. And by so much would the fetters of love be heavier and more unendurable than those of friendship, as love is more vehement and capricious, more dependent on those delicate peculiarities of imagination, and less capable of reduction to the ostensible merits of the object.

The state of society in which we exist is a mixture of feudal savageness and imperfect civilization. The narrow and unenlightened morality of the Christian religion is an aggravation of these evils. It is not even until lately that mankind have admitted that happiness is the sole end of the science of ethics, as of all other sciences; and that the fanatical idea of mortifying the flesh for the love of God has been discarded. I have heard, indeed, an ignorant collegian adduce, in favour of Christianity, its hostility to every worldly feeling!¹

But if happiness be the object of morality, of all human unions and

¹ The first Christian emperor made a law by which seduction was punished with death; if the female pleaded her own consent, she also was punished with death; if the parents endeavoured to screen the criminals, they were banished and their estates were confiscated; the slaves who might be accessory were burned alive, or forced to swallow melted lead. The very offspring of an illegal love were involved in the consequences of the sentence.—Gibbon's *Decline and Fall*, etc., vol. ii, p. 210. See also, for the hatred of the primitive Christians to love and even marriage, p. 269.

disunions; if the worthiness of every action is to be estimated by the quantity of pleasurable sensation it is calculated to produce, then the connection of the sexes is so long sacred as it contributes to the comfort of the parties, and is naturally dissolved when its evils are greater than its benefits. There is nothing immoral in this separation. Constancy has nothing virtuous in itself, independently of the pleasure it confers, and partakes of the temporizing spirit of vice in proportion as it endures tamely moral defects of magnitude in the object of its indiscreet choice. Love is free: to promise for ever to love the same woman is not less absurd than to promise to believe the same creed: such a vow, in both cases, excludes us from all inquiry. The language of the votarist is this: The woman I now love may be infinitely inferior to many others; the creed I now profess may be a mass of errors and absurdities; but I exclude myself from all future information as to the amiability of the one and the truth of the other, resolving blindly, and in spite of conviction, to adhere to them. Is this the language of delicacy and reason? Is the love of such a frigid heart of more worth than its belief?

The present system of constraint does no more, in the majority of instances, than make hypocrites or open enemies. Persons of delicacy and virtue, unhappily united to one whom they find it impossible to love, spend the loveliest season of their life in unproductive efforts to appear otherwise than they are, for the sake of the feelings of their partner or the welfare of their mutual offspring: those of less generosity and refinement openly avow their disappointment, and linger out the remnant of that union, which only death can dissolve, in a state of incurable bickering and hostility. The early education of their children takes its

colour from the squabbles of the parents; they are nursed in a systematic school of ill-humour, violence, and falsehood. Had they been suffered to part at the moment when indifference rendered their union irksome, they would have been spared many years of misery: they would have connected themselves more suitably, and would have found that happiness in the society of more congenial partners which is for ever denied them by the despotism of marriage. They would have been separately useful and happy members of society, who, whilst united, were miserable and rendered misanthropical by misery. The conviction that wedlock is indissoluble holds out the strongest of all temptations to the perverse: they indulge without restraint in acrimony, and all the little tyrannies of domestic life, when they know that their victim is without appeal. If this connection were put on a rational basis, each would be assured that habitual ill-temper would terminate in separation, and would check this vicious and dangerous propensity.

Prostitution is the legitimate offspring of marriage and its accompanying errors. Women, for no other crime than having followed the dictates of a natural appetite, are driven with fury from the comforts and sympathies of society. It is less venial than murder; and the punishment which is inflicted on her who destroys her child to escape reproach is lighter than the life of agony and disease to which the prostitute is irrecoverably doomed. Has a woman obeyed the impulse of unerring nature; —society declares war against her, pitiless and eternal war: she must be the tame slave, she must make no reprisals; theirs is the right of persecution, hers the duty of endurance. She lives a life of infamy: the loud and bitter laugh of scorn scares her from all return. She dies of long and lingering disease: yet *she* is in fault, *she* is the

criminal, *she* the froward and untamable child,—and society, forsooth, the pure and virtuous matron, who casts her as an abortion from her undefiled bosom! Society avenges herself on the criminals of her own creation; she is employed in anathematizing the vice to-day, which yesterday she was the most zealous to teach. Thus is formed one-tenth of the population of London: meanwhile the evil is twofold. Young men, excluded by the fanatical idea of chastity from the society of modest and accomplished women, associate with these vicious and miserable beings, destroying thereby all those exquisite and delicate sensibilities whose existence cold-hearted worldlings have denied; annihilating all genuine passion, and debasing that to a selfish feeling which is the excess of generosity and devotedness. Their body and mind alike crumble into a hideous wreck of humanity; idiocy and disease become perpetuated in their miserable offspring, and distant generations suffer for the bigoted morality of their forefathers. Chastity is a monkish and evangelical superstition, a greater foe to natural temperance even than intellectual sensuality; it strikes at the root of all domestic happiness, and consigns more than half of the human race to misery, that some few may monopolize according to law. A system could not well have been devised more studiously hostile to human happiness than marriage.

I conceive that from the abolition of marriage, the fit and natural arrangement of sexual connection would result. I by no means assert that the intercourse would be promiscuous: on the contrary, it appears, from the relation of parent to child, that this union is generally of long duration, and marked above all others with generosity and self-devotion. But this is a subject which it is perhaps premature to discuss. That which will result from the

abolition of marriage will be natural and right; because choice and change will be exempted from restraint.

In fact, religion and morality, as they now stand, compose a practical code of misery and servitude: the genius of human happiness must tear every leaf from the accursed book of God ere man can read the inscription on his heart. How would morality, dressed up in stiff stays and finery, start from her own disgusting image should she look in the mirror of nature!

VI. 45, 46:—

*To the red and baleful sun
That faintly twinkles there.*

The north polar star, to which the axis of the earth, in its present state of obliquity, points. It is exceedingly probable, from many considerations, that this obliquity will gradually diminish, until the equator coincides with the ecliptic: the nights and days will then become equal on the earth throughout the year, and probably the seasons also. There is no great extravagance in presuming that the progress of the perpendicularity of the poles may be as rapid as the progress of intellect; or that there should be a perfect identity between the moral and physical improvement of the human species. It is certain that wisdom is not compatible with disease, and that, in the present state of the climates of the earth, health, in the true and comprehensive sense of the word, is out of the reach of civilized man. Astronomy teaches us that the earth is now in its progress, and that the poles are every year becoming more and more perpendicular to the ecliptic. The strong evidence afforded by the history of mythology, and geological researches, that some event of this nature has taken place already, affords a strong presumption that this progress is not merely an oscillation, as has been

surmised by some late astronomers¹. Bones of animals peculiar to the torrid zone have been found in the north of Siberia, and on the banks of the river Ohio. Plants have been found in the fossil state in the interior of Germany, which demand the present climate of Hindostan for their production². The researches of M. Bailly³ establish the existence of a people who inhabited a tract in Tartary 49° north latitude, of greater antiquity than either the Indians, the Chinese, or the Chaldeans, from whom these nations derived their sciences and theology. We find, from the testimony of ancient writers, that Britain, Germany, and France were much colder than at present, and that their great rivers were annually frozen over. Astronomy teaches us also that since this period the obliquity of the earth's position has been considerably diminished.

VI. 171-173:—

*No atom of this turbulence fulfils
A vague and unnecessary task,
Or acts but as it must and ought to act.*

‘Deux exemples serviront à nous rendre plus sensible le principe qui vient d’être posé; nous emprunterons l’un du physique et l’autre du moral. Dans un tourbillon de poussière qu’élève un vent impétueux, quelque confus qu’il paraisse à nos yeux; dans la plus affreuse tempête excitée par des vents opposés qui soulèvent les flots,—il n’y a pas une seule molécule de poussière ou d’eau qui soit placée au *hasard*, qui n’ait sa cause suffisante pour occuper le lieu où elle se trouve, et qui n’agisse rigoureusement de la manière dont elle doit agir. Un géomètre qui connaîtrait exactement les différentes forces qui agissent dans ces deux cas, et les propriétés des molécules qui sont mues, démontrerait que d’après des

causes données, chaque molécule agit précisément comme elle doit agir, et ne peut agir autrement qu’elle ne fait.

‘Dans les convulsions terribles qui agitent quelquefois les sociétés politiques, et qui produisent souvent le renversement d’un empire, il n’y a pas une seule action, une seule parole, une seule pensée, une seule volonté, une seule passion dans les agens qui concourent à la révolution comme destructeurs ou comme victimes, qui ne soit nécessaire, qui n’agisse comme elle doit agir, qui n’opère infailliblement les effets qu’elle doit opérer, suivant la place qu’occupent ces agens dans ce tourbillon moral. Cela paraîtrait évident pour une intelligence qui sera en état de saisir et d’apprécier toutes les actions et réactions des esprits et des corps de ceux qui contribuent à cette révolution.’—*Système de la Nature*, vol. i, p. 44.

VI. 198:—

Necessity! thou mother of the world!

He who asserts the doctrine of Necessity means that, contemplating the events which compose the moral and material universe, he beholds only an immense and uninterrupted chain of causes and effects, no one of which could occupy any other place than it does occupy, or act in any other place than it does act. The idea of necessity is obtained by our experience of the connection between objects, the uniformity of the operations of nature, the constant conjunction of similar events, and the consequent inference of one from the other. Mankind are therefore agreed in the admission of necessity, if they admit that these two circumstances take place in voluntary action. Motive is to voluntary action in the human mind what cause is to effect in the material universe. The

¹ Laplace, *Système du Monde*.

² Cabanis, *Rapports du Physique et du Moral de l'Homme*, vol. ii, p. 406.

³ Bailly, *Lettres sur les Sciences*, à Voltaire.

word liberty, as applied to mind, is analogous to the word chance as applied to matter: they spring from an ignorance of the certainty of the conjunction of antecedents and consequents.

Every human being is irresistibly impelled to act precisely as he does act: in the eternity which preceded his birth a chain of causes was generated, which, operating under the name of motives, make it impossible that any thought of his mind, or any action of his life, should be otherwise than it is. Were the doctrine of Necessity false, the human mind would no longer be a legitimate object of science; from like causes it would be in vain that we should expect like effects; the strongest motive would no longer be paramount over the conduct; all knowledge would be vague and undeterminate; we could not predict with any certainty that we might not meet as an enemy to-morrow him with whom we have parted in friendship to-night; the most probable inducements and the clearest reasonings would lose the invariable influence they possess. The contrary of this is demonstrably the fact. Similar circumstances produce the same unvariable effects. The precise character and motives of any man on any occasion being given, the moral philosopher could predict his actions with as much certainty as the natural philosopher could predict the effects of the mixture of any particular chemical substances. Why is the aged husbandman more experienced than the young beginner? Because there is a uniform, undeniable necessity in the operations of the material universe. Why is the old statesman more skilful than the raw politician? Because, relying on the necessary conjunction of motive and action, he proceeds to produce moral effects, by the application of those moral causes which experience has shown to be effectual. Some actions

may be found to which we can attach no motives, but these are the effects of causes with which we are unacquainted. Hence the relation which motive bears to voluntary action is that of cause to effect; nor, placed in this point of view, is it, or ever has it been, the subject of popular or philosophical dispute. None but the few fanatics who are engaged in the herculean task of reconciling the justice of their God with the misery of man, will longer outrage common sense by the supposition of an event without a cause, a voluntary action without a motive. History, politics, morals, criticism, all grounds of reasonings, all principles of science, alike assume the truth of the doctrine of Necessity. No farmer carrying his corn to market doubts the sale of it at the market price. The master of a manufactory no more doubts that he can purchase the human labour necessary for his purposes than that his machinery will act as they have been accustomed to act.

But, whilst none have scrupled to admit necessity as influencing matter, many have disputed its dominion over mind. Independently of its militating with the received ideas of the justice of God, it is by no means obvious to a superficial inquiry. When the mind observes its own operations, it feels no connection of motive and action: but as we know 'nothing more of causation than the constant conjunction of objects and the consequent inference of one from the other, as we find that these two circumstances are universally allowed to have place in voluntary action, we may be easily led to own that they are subjected to the necessity common to all causes.' The actions of the will have a regular conjunction with circumstances and characters; motive is to voluntary action what cause is to effect. But the only idea we can form of causation is a constant conjunction of similar objects, and the consequent inference of one

from the other: wherever this is the case necessity is clearly established.

The idea of liberty, applied metaphorically to the will, has sprung from a misconception of the meaning of the word power. What is power?—*id quod potest*, that which can produce any given effect. To deny power is to say that nothing can or has the power to be or act. In the only true sense of the word power, it applies with equal force to the lodestone as to the human will. Do you think these motives, which I shall present, are powerful enough to rouse him? is a question just as common as, Do you think this lever has the power of raising this weight? The advocates of free-will assert that the will has the power of refusing to be determined by the strongest motive: but the strongest motive is that which, overcoming all others, ultimately prevails; this assertion therefore amounts to a denial of the will being ultimately determined by that motive which does determine it, which is absurd. But it is equally certain that a man cannot resist the strongest motive as that he cannot overcome a physical impossibility.

The doctrine of Necessity tends to introduce a great change into the established notions of morality, and utterly to destroy religion. Reward and punishment must be considered, by the Necessarian, merely as motives which he would employ in order to procure the adoption or abandonment of any given line of conduct. Desert, in the present sense of the word, would no longer have any meaning; and he who should inflict pain upon another for no better reason than that he deserved it, would only gratify his revenge under pretence of satisfying justice. It is not enough, says the advocate of free-will, that a criminal should be prevented from a repetition of his crime: he should feel pain, and his torments, when justly inflicted, ought precisely

to be proportioned to his fault. But utility is morality; that which is incapable of producing happiness is useless; and though the crime of Damians must be condemned, yet the frightful torments which revenge, under the name of justice, inflicted on this unhappy man cannot be supposed to have augmented, even at the long run, the stock of pleasurable sensation in the world. At the same time, the doctrine of Necessity does not in the least diminish our disapprobation of vice. The conviction which all feel that a viper is a poisonous animal, and that a tiger is constrained, by the inevitable condition of his existence, to devour men, does not induce us to avoid them less sedulously, or, even more, to hesitate in destroying them: but he would surely be of a hard heart who, meeting with a serpent on a desert island, or in a situation where it was incapable of injury, should wantonly deprive it of existence. A Necessarian is inconsequent to his own principles if he indulges in hatred or contempt; the compassion which he feels for the criminal is unmingled with a desire of injuring him: he looks with an elevated and dreadless composure upon the links of the universal chain as they pass before his eyes; whilst cowardice, curiosity, and inconsistency only assail him in proportion to the feebleness and indistinctness with which he has perceived and rejected the delusions of free-will.

Religion is the perception of the relation in which we stand to the principle of the universe. But if the principle of the universe be not an organic being, the model and prototype of man, the relation between it and human beings is absolutely none. Without some insight into its will respecting our actions religion is nugatory and vain. But will is only a mode of animal mind; moral qualities also are such as only a human being can possess; to attribute them to the principle of the universe is to

annex to it properties incompatible with any possible definition of its nature. It is probable that the word God was originally only an expression denoting the unknown cause of the known events which men perceived in the universe. By the vulgar mistake of a metaphor for a real being, of a word for a thing, it became a man, endowed with human qualities and governing the universe as an earthly monarch governs his kingdom. Their addresses to this imaginary being, indeed, are much in the same style as those of subjects to a king. They acknowledge his benevolence, deprecate his anger, and supplicate his favour.

But the doctrine of Necessity teaches us that in no case could any event have happened otherwise than it did happen, and that, if God is the author of good, He is also the author of evil; that, if He is entitled to our gratitude for the one, He is entitled to our hatred for the other; that, admitting the existence of this hypothetic being, He is also subjected to the dominion of an immutable necessity. It is plain that the same arguments which prove that God is the author of food, light, and life, prove Him also to be the author of poison, darkness, and death. The wide-wasting earthquake, the storm, the battle, and the tyranny, are attributable to this hypothetic being in the same degree as the fairest forms of nature, sunshine, liberty, and peace.

But we are taught, by the doctrine of Necessity, that there is neither good nor evil in the universe, otherwise than as the events to which we apply these epithets have relation to our own peculiar mode of being. Still less than with the hypothesis of a God will the doctrine of Necessity accord with the belief of a future state of punishment. God made man such as he is, and then damned him for being so: for to say that God was the author of all good, and man the author of all evil, is to say

that one man made a straight line and a crooked one, and another man made the incongruity.

A Mahometan story, much to the present purpose, is recorded, wherein Adam and Moses are introduced disputing before God in the following manner. Thou, says Moses, art Adam, whom God created, and animated with the breath of life, and caused to be worshipped by the angels, and placed in Paradise, from whence mankind have been expelled for thy fault. Whereto Adam answered, Thou art Moses, whom God chose for His apostle, and entrusted with His word, by giving thee the tables of the law, and whom He vouchsafed to admit to discourse with Himself. How many years dost thou find the law was written before I was created? Says Moses, Forty. And dost thou not find, replied Adam, these words therein, And Adam rebelled against his Lord and transgressed? Which Moses confessing, Dost thou therefore blame me, continued he, for doing that which God wrote of me that I should do, forty years before I was created, nay, for what was decreed concerning me fifty thousand years before the creation of heaven and earth?—Sale's *Prelim. Disc. to the Koran*, p. 164.

VII. 13:—

There is no God.

This negation must be understood solely to affect a creative Deity. The hypothesis of a pervading Spirit co-eternal with the universe remains unshaken.

A close examination of the validity of the proofs adduced to support any proposition is the only secure way of attaining truth, on the advantages of which it is unnecessary to descant: our knowledge of the existence of a Deity is a subject of such importance that it cannot be too minutely investigated; in consequence of this conviction we

proceed briefly and impartially to examine the proofs which have been adduced. It is necessary first to consider the nature of belief.

When a proposition is offered to the mind, it perceives the agreement or disagreement of the ideas of which it is composed. A perception of their agreement is termed *belief*. Many obstacles frequently prevent this perception from being immediate; these the mind attempts to remove in order that the perception may be distinct. The mind is active in the investigation in order to perfect the state of perception of the relation which the component ideas of the proposition bear to each, which is passive: the investigation being confused with the perception has induced many falsely to imagine that the mind is active in belief,—that belief is an act of volition,—in consequence of which it may be regulated by the mind. Pursuing, continuing this mistake, they have attached a degree of criminality to disbelief; of which, in its nature, it is incapable: it is equally incapable of merit.

Belief, then, is a passion, the strength of which, like every other passion, is in precise proportion to the degrees of excitement.

The degrees of excitement are three.

The senses are the sources of all knowledge to the mind; consequently their evidence claims the strongest assent.

The decision of the mind, founded upon our own experience, derived from these sources, claims the next degree.

The experience of others, which addresses itself to the former one, occupies the lowest degree.

(A graduated scale, on which should be marked the capabilities of propositions to approach to the test of the senses, would be a just barometer of the belief which ought to be attached to them.)

Consequently no testimony can be

admitted which is contrary to reason; reason is founded on the evidence of our senses.

Every proof may be referred to one of these three divisions: it is to be considered what arguments we receive from each of them, which should convince us of the existence of a Deity.

1st, The evidence of the senses. If the Deity should appear to us, if He should convince our senses of His existence, this revelation would necessarily command belief. Those to whom the Deity has thus appeared have the strongest possible conviction of His existence. But the God of Theologians is incapable of local visibility.

2d, Reason. It is urged that man knows that whatever is must either have had a beginning, or have existed from all eternity: he also knows that whatever is not eternal must have had a cause. When this reasoning is applied to the universe, it is necessary to prove that it was created: until that is clearly demonstrated we may reasonably suppose that it has endured from all eternity. We must prove design before we can infer a designer. The only idea which we can form of causation is derivable from the constant conjunction of objects, and the consequent inference of one from the other. In a case where two propositions are diametrically opposite, the mind believes that which is least incomprehensible;—it is easier to suppose that the universe has existed from all eternity than to conceive a being beyond its limits capable of creating it: if the mind sinks beneath the weight of one, is it an alleviation to increase the intolerability of the burthen?

The other argument, which is founded on a man's knowledge of his own existence, stands thus. A man knows not only that he now is, but that once he was not; consequently there must have been a cause. But our idea of causation is alone derivable from the

constant conjunction of objects and the consequent inference of one from the other; and, reasoning experimentally, we can only infer from effects causes exactly adequate to those effects. But there certainly is a generative power which is effected by certain instruments: we cannot prove that it is inherent in these instruments; nor is the contrary hypothesis capable of demonstration: we admit that the generative power is incomprehensible; but to suppose that the same effect is produced by an eternal, omniscient, omnipotent being leaves the cause in the same obscurity, but renders it more incomprehensible.

3d, Testimony. It is required that testimony should not be contrary to reason. The testimony that the Deity convinces the senses of men of His existence can only be admitted by us if our mind considers it less probable that these men should have been deceived than that the Deity should have appeared to them. Our reason can never admit the testimony of men, who not only declare that they were eye-witnesses of miracles, but that the Deity was irrational; for He commanded that He should be believed, He proposed the highest rewards for faith, eternal punishments for disbelief. We can only command voluntary actions; belief is not an act of volition; the mind is even passive, or involuntarily active; from this it is evident that we have no sufficient testimony, or rather that testimony is insufficient to prove the being of a God. It has been before shown that it cannot be deduced from reason. They alone, then, who have been convinced by the evidence of the senses can believe it.

Hence it is evident that, having no proofs from either of the three sources of conviction, the mind *cannot* believe the existence of a creative God: it is also evident that, as belief is a passion of the mind, no degree of criminality

is attachable to disbelief; and that they only are reprehensible who neglect to remove the false medium through which their mind views any subject of discussion. Every reflecting mind must acknowledge that there is no proof of the existence of a Deity.

God is an hypothesis, and, as such, stands in need of proof: the *onus probandi* rests on the theist. Sir Isaac Newton says: *Hypotheses non fingo, quicquid enim ex phaenomenis non deducitur hypothesis vocanda est, et hypothesis vel metaphysicae, vel physicae, vel qualitatum occultarum, seu mechanicae, in philosophia locum non habent.* To all proofs of the existence of a creative God apply this valuable rule. We see a variety of bodies possessing a variety of powers: we merely know their effects; we are in a state of ignorance with respect to their essences and causes. These Newton calls the phenomena of things; but the pride of philosophy is unwilling to admit its ignorance of their causes. From the phenomena, which are the objects of our senses, we attempt to infer a cause, which we call God, and gratuitously endow it with all negative and contradictory qualities. From this hypothesis we invent this general name, to conceal our ignorance of causes and essences. The being called God by no means answers with the conditions prescribed by Newton; it bears every mark of a veil woven by philosophical conceit, to hide the ignorance of philosophers even from themselves. They borrow the threads of its texture from the anthropomorphism of the vulgar. Words have been used by sophists for the same purposes, from the occult qualities of the peripatetics to the *effluvia* of Boyle and the *crinities* or *nebulae* of Herschel. God is represented as infinite, eternal, incomprehensible; He is contained under every *predicate in non* that the logic of ignorance could fabricate. Even His worshippers allow that it is impossible

to form any idea of Him: they exclaim with the French poet,

Pour dire ce qu'il est, il faut être lui-même.

Lord Bacon says that atheism leaves to man reason, philosophy, natural piety, laws, reputation, and everything that can serve to conduct him to virtue; but superstition destroys all these, and erects itself into a tyranny over the understandings of men: hence atheism never disturbs the government, but renders man more clear-sighted, since he sees nothing beyond the boundaries of the present life.—Bacon's *Moral Essays*.

La première théologie de l'homme lui fit d'abord craindre et adorer les éléments même, des objets matériels et grossiers; il rendit ensuite ses hommages à des agents présidant aux éléments, à des génies inférieurs, à des héros, ou à des hommes doués de grandes qualités. A force de réfléchir il crut simplifier les choses en soumettant la nature entière à un seul agent, à un esprit, à une âme universelle, qui mettait cette nature et ses parties en mouvement. En remontant de causes en causes, les mortels ont fini par ne rien voir; et c'est dans cette obscurité qu'ils ont placé leur Dieu; c'est dans cet abîme ténébreux que leur imagination inquiète travaille toujours à se fabriquer des chimères, qui les affligeront jusqu'à ce que la connaissance de la nature les détrompe des fantômes qu'ils ont toujours si vainement adorés.

Si nous voulons nous rendre compte de nos idées sur la Divinité, nous serons obligés de convenir que, par le mot *Dieu*, les hommes n'ont jamais pu désigner que la cause la plus cachée, la plus éloignée, la plus inconnue des effets qu'ils voyaient: ils ne font usage de ce mot, que lorsque le jeu des causes naturelles et connues cesse d'être visible pour eux; dès qu'ils perdent le fil de ces causes, ou dès que leur esprit ne

peut plus en suivre la chaîne, ils tranchent leur difficulté, et terminent leurs recherches en appelant Dieu la dernière des causes, c'est-à-dire celle qui est au-delà de toutes les causes qu'ils connaissent; ainsi ils ne font qu'assigner une dénomination vague à une cause ignorée, à laquelle leur paresse ou les bornes de leurs connaissances les forcent de s'arrêter. Toutes les fois qu'on nous dit que Dieu est l'auteur de quelque phénomène, cela signifie qu'on ignore comment un tel phénomène a pu s'opérer par le secours des forces ou des causes que nous connaissons dans la nature. C'est ainsi que le commun des hommes, dont l'ignorance est le partage, attribue à la Divinité non seulement les effets inusités qui les frappent, mais encore les événements les plus simples, dont les causes sont les plus faciles à connaître pour qui-conque a pu les méditer. En un mot, l'homme a toujours respecté les causes inconnues des effets surprenans, que son ignorance l'empêchait de démêler. Ce fut sur les débris de la nature que les hommes élevèrent le colosse imaginaire de la Divinité.

Si l'ignorance de la nature donna la naissance aux dieux, la connaissance de la nature est faite pour les détruire. A mesure que l'homme s'instruit, ses forces et ses ressources augmentent avec ses lumières; les sciences, les arts conservateurs, l'industrie, lui fournissent des secours; l'expérience le rassure ou lui procure des moyens de résister aux efforts de bien des causes qui cessent de l'alarmer dès qu'il les a connues. En un mot, ses terreurs se dissipent dans la même proportion que son esprit s'éclaire. L'homme instruit cesse d'être superstitieux.

Ce n'est jamais que sur parole que des peuples entiers adorent le Dieu de leurs pères et de leurs prêtres: l'autorité, la confiance, la soumission, et l'habitude leur tiennent lieu de conviction et de preuves; ils se prosternent

et prient, parce que leurs pères leur ont appris à se prosterner et prier : mais pourquoi ceux-ci se sont-ils mis à genoux ? C'est que dans les temps éloignés leurs législateurs et leurs guides leur en ont fait un devoir. 'Adorez et croyez,' ont-ils dit, 'des dieux que vous ne pouvez comprendre ; rapportez-vous-en à notre sagesse profonde ; nous en savons plus que vous sur la divinité.' Mais pourquoi m'en rapporterais-je à vous ? C'est que Dieu le veut ainsi, c'est que Dieu vous punira si vous osez résister. Mais ce Dieu n'est-il donc pas la chose en question ? Cependant les hommes se sont toujours payés de ce cercle vicieux ; la paresse de leur esprit leur fit trouver plus court de s'en rapporter au jugement des autres. Toutes les notions religieuses sont fondées uniquement sur l'autorité ; toutes les religions du monde défendent l'examen et ne veulent pas que l'on raisonne ; c'est l'autorité qui veut qu'on croie en Dieu ; ce Dieu n'est lui-même fondé que sur l'autorité de quelques hommes qui prétendent le connaître, et venir de sa part pour l'annoncer à la terre. Un Dieu fait par les hommes a sans doute besoin des hommes pour se faire connaître aux hommes.

Ne serait-ce donc que pour des prêtres, des inspirés, des métaphysiciens que serait réservée la conviction de l'existence d'un Dieu, que l'on dit néanmoins si nécessaire à tout le genre humain ? Mais trouvons-nous de l'harmonie entre les opinions théologiques des différens inspirés, ou des penseurs répandus sur la terre ? Ceux même qui font profession d'adorer le même Dieu, sont-ils d'accord sur son compte ? Sont-ils contents des preuves que leurs collègues apportent de son existence ? Souscrivent-ils unanimement aux idées qu'ils présentent sur sa nature, sur sa conduite, sur la façon d'entendre ses prétendus oracles ? Est-il une contrée sur la terre où la science de Dieu se soit réellement perfectionnée ? A-t-elle

pris quelque part la consistance et l'uniformité que nous voyons prendre aux connaissances humaines, aux arts les plus futiles, aux métiers les plus méprisés ? Ces mots d'*esprit*, d'*immatérialité*, de *création*, de *prédestination*, de *grâce* ; cette foule de distinctions subtiles dont la théologie s'est partout remplie dans quelques pays, ces inventions si ingénieuses, imaginées par des penseurs qui se sont succédés depuis tant de siècles, n'ont fait, hélas ! qu'embrouiller les choses, et jamais la science la plus nécessaire aux hommes n'a jusqu'ici pu acquérir la moindre fixité. Depuis des milliers d'années ces rêveurs oisifs se sont perpétuellement relayés pour méditer la Divinité, pour deviner ses voies cachées, pour inventer des hypothèses propres à développer cette énigme importante. Leur peu de succès n'a point découragé la vanité théologique ; toujours on a parlé de Dieu : on s'est égaré pour lui, et cet être sublime demeure toujours le plus ignoré et le plus discuté.

Les hommes auraient été trop heureux, si, se bornant aux objets visibles qui les intéressent, ils eussent employé à perfectionner leurs sciences réelles, leurs lois, leur morale, leur éducation, la moitié des efforts qu'ils ont mis dans leurs recherches sur la Divinité. Ils auraient été bien plus sages encore, et plus fortunés, s'ils eussent pu consentir à laisser leurs guides désœuvrés se quereller entre eux, et sonder des profondeurs capables de les étourdir, sans se mêler de leurs disputes insensées. Mais il est de l'essence de l'ignorance d'attacher de l'importance à ce qu'elle ne comprend pas. La vanité humaine fait que l'esprit se roidit contre des difficultés. Plus un objet se dérobe à nos yeux, plus nous faisons d'efforts pour le saisir, parce que dès-lors il aiguillonne notre orgueil, il excite notre curiosité, il nous paraît intéressant. En combattant pour son Dieu chacun ne combattit en effet que pour les

intérêts de sa propre vanité, qui de toutes les passions produites par la mal-organisation de la société est la plus prompte à s'alarmer, et la plus propre à produire de très grandes folies.

Si écartant pour un moment les idées fâcheuses que la théologie nous donne d'un Dieu capricieux, dont les décrets partiels et despotiques décident du sort des humains, nous ne voulons fixer nos yeux que sur la bonté prétendue, que tous les hommes, même en tremblant devant ce Dieu, s'accordent à lui donner ; si nous lui supposons le projet qu'on lui prête de n'avoir travaillé que pour sa propre gloire, d'exiger les hommages des êtres intelligens ; de ne chercher dans ses œuvres que le bien-être du genre humain : comment concilier ces vues et ces dispositions avec l'ignorance vraiment invincible dans laquelle ce Dieu, si glorieux et si bon, laisse la plupart des hommes sur son compte ? Si Dieu veut être connu, chéri, remercié, que ne se montre-t-il sous des traits favorables à tous ces êtres intelligens dont il veut être aimé et adoré ? Pourquoi ne point se manifester à toute la terre d'une façon non équivoque, bien plus capable de nous convaincre que ces révélations particulières qui semblent accuser la Divinité d'une partialité fâcheuse pour quelques-unes de ses créatures ? Le tout-puissant n'aurait-il donc pas des moyens plus convainquans de se montrer aux hommes que ces métamorphoses ridicules, ces incarnations prétendues, qui nous sont attestées par des écrivains si peu d'accord entre eux dans les récits qu'ils en font ? Au lieu de tant de miracles, inventés pour prouver la mission divine de tant de législateurs révéés par les différens peuples du monde, le souverain des esprits ne pouvait-il pas convaincre tout d'un coup l'esprit humain des choses qu'il a voulu lui faire connaître ? Au lieu de suspendre un soleil dans la voûte du firmament ; au lieu de répandre

sans ordre les étoiles et les constellations qui remplissent l'espace, n'eût-il pas été plus conforme aux vues d'un Dieu si jaloux de sa gloire et si bien-intentionné pour l'homme d'écrire, d'une façon non sujette à dispute, son nom, ses attributs, ses volontés permanentes en caractères ineffaçables, et lisibles également pour tous les habitans de la terre ? Personne alors n'aurait pu douter de l'existence d'un Dieu, de ses volontés claires, de ses intentions visibles. Sous les yeux de ce Dieu si terrible, personne n'aurait eu l'audace de violer ses ordonnances ; nul mortel n'eût osé se mettre dans le cas d'attirer sa colère : enfin nul homme n'eût eu le front d'en imposer en son nom, ou d'interpréter ses volontés suivant ses propres fantaisies.

En effet, quand même on admettrait l'existence du Dieu théologique et la réalité des attributs si discordans qu'on lui donne, l'on n'en peut rien conclure, pour autoriser la conduite ou les cultes qu'on prescrit de lui rendre. La théologie est vraiment *le tonneau des Danaïdes*. A force de qualités contradictoires et d'assertions hasardées, elle a, pour ainsi dire, tellement garrotté son Dieu qu'elle l'a mis dans l'impossibilité d'agir. S'il est infiniment bon, quelle raison aurions-nous de le craindre ? S'il est infiniment sage, de quoi nous inquiéter sur notre sort ? S'il sait tout, pourquoi l'avertir de nos besoins, et le fatiguer de nos prières ? S'il est partout, pourquoi lui élever des temples ? S'il est maître de tout, pourquoi lui faire des sacrifices et des offrandes ? S'il est juste, comment croire qu'il punisse des créatures qu'il a rempli de faiblesses ? Si la grâce fait tout en elles, quelle raison aurait-il de les récompenser ? S'il est tout-puissant, comment l'offenser, comment lui résister ? S'il est raisonnable, comment se mettrait-il en colère contre des aveugles, à qui il a laissé la liberté de déraisonner ? S'il est immuable, de quel droit prétendrions-nous

faire changer ses décrets? S'il est inconcevable, pourquoi nous en occuper? S'IL A PARLÉ, POURQUOI L'UNIVERS N'EST-IL PAS CONVAINCU? Si la connaissance d'un Dieu est la plus nécessaire, pourquoi n'est-elle pas la plus évidente et la plus claire?—*Système de la Nature*. London, 1781.

The enlightened and benevolent Pliny thus publicly professes himself an atheist:—Quapropter effigiem Dei formamque quaerere imbecillitatis humanae reor. Quisquis est Deus (si modo est alius) et quacunque in parte, totus est sensus, totus est visus, totus auditus, totus animae, totus animi, totus sui. . . . Imperfectae vero in homine naturae praecipua solatia ne deum quidem posse omnia. Namque nec sibi potest mortem consciscere, si velit, quod homini dedit optimum in tantis vitae poenis: nec mortales aeternitate donare, aut revocare defunctos; nec facere ut qui vixit non vixerit, qui honores gessit non gesserit, nullumque habere in praeteritum ius, praeterquam oblivionis, atque (ut facietis quoque argumentis societas haec cum deo copuletur) ut bis dena viginti non sint, et multa similiter efficere non posse.—Per quae declaratur haud dubie naturae potentiam id quoque esse quod Deum vocamus.—Plin. *Nat. Hist.* cap. de Deo.

The consistent Newtonian is necessarily an atheist. See Sir W. Drummond's *Academical Questions*, chap. iii. —Sir W. seems to consider the atheism to which it leads as a sufficient presumption of the falsehood of the system of gravitation; but surely it is more consistent with the good faith of philosophy to admit a deduction from facts than an hypothesis incapable of proof, although it might militate with the obstinate preconceptions of the mob. Had this author, instead of inveighing against the guilt and absurdity of atheism, demonstrated its falsehood,

his conduct would have been more suited to the modesty of the sceptic and the toleration of the philosopher.

Omnia enim per Dei potentiam facta sunt: imo quia naturae potentia nulla est nisi ipsa Dei potentia. Certum est nos eatenus Dei potentiam non intelligere, quatenus causas naturales ignoramus; adeoque stulte ad eandem Dei potentiam recurritur, quando rei alicuius causam naturalem, sive est, ipsam Dei potentiam ignoramus.—Spinosa, *Tract. Theologico-Pol.* chap. i, p. 14.

VII. 67:—

Ahasuerus, rise!

'Ahasuerus the Jew crept forth from the dark cave of Mount Carmel. Near two thousand years have elapsed since he was first goaded by never-ending restlessness to rove the globe from pole to pole. When our Lord was wearied with the burthen of His ponderous cross, and wanted to rest before the door of Ahasuerus, the unfeeling wretch drove Him away with brutality. The Saviour of mankind staggered, sinking under the heavy load, but uttered no complaint. An angel of death appeared before Ahasuerus, and exclaimed indignantly, "Barbarian! thou hast denied rest to the Son of man: be it denied thee also, until He comes to judge the world."

'A black demon, let loose from hell upon Ahasuerus, goads him now from country to country; he is denied the consolation which death affords, and precluded from the rest of the peaceful grave.

'Ahasuerus crept forth from the dark cave of Mount Carmel—he shook the dust from his beard—and taking up one of the skulls heaped there, hurled it down the eminence: it rebounded from the earth in shivered atoms. "This was my father!" roared Ahasuerus. Seven more skulls rolled down from rock to rock; while the infuriate Jew, following them with

ghastly looks, exclaimed—"And these were my wives!" He still continued to hurl down skull after skull, roaring in dreadful accents—"And these, and these, and these were my children! They *could die*; but I! reprobate wretch! alas! I cannot die! Dreadful beyond conception is the judgement that hangs over me. Jerusalem fell—I crushed the sucking babe, and precipitated myself into the destructive flames. I cursed the Romans—but, alas! alas! the restless curse held me by the hair,—and I could not die!

"Rome the giantess fell—I placed myself before the falling statue—she fell and did not crush me. Nations sprang up and disappeared before me;—but I remained and did not die. From cloud-encircled cliffs did I precipitate myself into the ocean; but the foaming billows cast me upon the shore, and the burning arrow of existence pierced my cold heart again. I leaped into Etna's flaming abyss, and roared with the giants for ten long months, polluting with my groans the Mount's sulphureous mouth—ah! ten long months. The volcano fermented, and in a fiery stream of lava cast me up. I lay torn by the torture-snakes of hell amid the glowing cinders, and yet continued to exist.—A forest was on fire: I darted on wings of fury and despair into the crackling wood. Fire dropped upon me from the trees, but the flames only singed my limbs; alas! it could not consume them.—I now mixed with the butchers of mankind, and plunged in the tempest of the raging battle. I roared defiance to the infuriate Gaul, defiance to the victorious German; but arrows and spears rebounded in shivers from my body. The Saracen's flaming sword broke upon my skull: balls in vain hissed upon me: the lightnings of battle glared harmless around my loins: in vain did the elephant trample on me, in vain the iron hoof of the wrathful steed! The mine, big with

destructive power, burst upon me, and hurled me high in the air—I fell on heaps of smoking limbs, but was only singed. The giant's steel club rebounded from my body; the executioner's hand could not strangle me, the tiger's tooth could not pierce me, nor would the hungry lion in the circus devour me. I cohabited with poisonous snakes, and pinched the red crest of the dragon.—The serpent stung, but could not destroy me. The dragon tormented, but dared not to devour me.—I now provoked the fury of tyrants: I said to Nero, 'Thou art a bloodhound!' I said to Christiern, 'Thou art a bloodhound!' I said to Muley Ismail, 'Thou art a bloodhound!'—The tyrants invented cruel torments, but did not kill me.—Ha! not to be able to die—not to be able to die—not to be permitted to rest after the toils of life—to be doomed to be imprisoned for ever in the clay-formed dungeon—to be for ever clogged with this worthless body, its load of diseases and infirmities—to be condemned to [be]hold for millenniums that yawning monster Sameness, and Time, that hungry hyaena, ever bearing children, and ever devouring again her offspring!—Ha! not to be permitted to die! Awful Avenger in Heaven, hast Thou in Thine armoury of wrath a punishment more dreadful? then let it thunder upon me, command a hurricane to sweep me down to the foot of Carmel, that I there may lie extended; may pant, and writhe, and die!"

This fragment is the translation of part of some German work, whose title I have vainly endeavoured to discover. I picked it up, dirty and torn, some years ago, in Lincoln's-Inn Fields.

VII. 135, 136:—

*I will beget a Son, and He shall bear
The sins of all the world.*

A book is put into our hands when children, called the Bible, the purport

of whose history is briefly this: That God made the earth in six days, and there planted a delightful garden, in which He placed the first pair of human beings. In the midst of the garden He planted a tree, whose fruit, although within their reach, they were forbidden to touch. That the Devil, in the shape of a snake, persuaded them to eat of this fruit; in consequence of which God condemned both them and their posterity yet unborn to satisfy His justice by their eternal misery. That, four thousand years after these events (the human race in the meanwhile having gone unredeemed to perdition), God engendered with the betrothed wife of a carpenter in Judea (whose virginity was nevertheless uninjured), and begat a son, whose name was Jesus Christ; and who was crucified and died, in order that no more men might be devoted to hell-fire, He bearing the burthen of His Father's displeasure by proxy. The book states, in addition, that the soul of whoever disbelieves this sacrifice will be burned with everlasting fire.

During many ages of misery and darkness this story gained implicit belief; but at length men arose who suspected that it was a fable and imposture, and that Jesus Christ, so far from being a God, was only a man like themselves. But a numerous set of men, who derived and still derive immense emoluments from this opinion, in the shape of a popular belief, told the vulgar that if they did not believe in the Bible they would be damned to all eternity; and burned, imprisoned, and poisoned all the unbiassed and unconnected inquirers who occasionally arose. They still oppress them, so far as the people, now become more enlightened, will allow.

The belief in all that the Bible contains is called Christianity. A Roman

governor of Judea, at the instance of a priest-led mob, crucified a man called Jesus eighteen centuries ago. He was a man of pure life, who desired to rescue his countrymen from the tyranny of their barbarous and degrading superstitions. The common fate of all who desire to benefit mankind awaited him. The rabble, at the instigation of the priests, demanded his death, although his very judge made public acknowledgement of his innocence. Jesus was sacrificed to the honour of that God with whom he was afterwards confounded. It is of importance, therefore, to distinguish between the pretended character of this being as the Son of God and the Saviour of the world, and his real character as a man, who, for a vain attempt to reform the world, paid the forfeit of his life to that overbearing tyranny which has since so long desolated the universe in his name. Whilst the one is a hypocritical Daemon, who announces Himself as the God of compassion and peace, even whilst He stretches forth His blood-red hand with the sword of discord to waste the earth, having confessedly devised this scheme of desolation from eternity; the other stands in the foremost list of those true heroes who have died in the glorious martyrdom of liberty, and have braved torture, contempt, and poverty in the cause of suffering humanity¹.

The vulgar, ever in extremes, became persuaded that the crucifixion of Jesus was a supernatural event. Testimonies of miracles, so frequent in unenlightened ages, were not wanting to prove that he was something divine. This belief, rolling through the lapse of ages, met with the reveries of Plato and the reasonings of Aristotle, and acquired force and extent, until the divinity of Jesus became a dogma, which to dispute was death, which to doubt was infamy.

¹ Since writing this note I have some reason to suspect that Jesus was an ambitious man, who aspired to the throne of Judea.

Christianity is now the established religion: he who attempts to impugn it must be contented to behold murderers and traitors take precedence of him in public opinion; though, if his genius be equal to his courage, and assisted by a peculiar coalition of circumstances, future ages may exalt him to a divinity, and persecute others in his name, as he was persecuted in the name of his predecessor in the homage of the world.

The same means that have supported every other popular belief have supported Christianity. War, imprisonment, assassination, and falsehood; deeds of unexampled and incomparable atrocity have made it what it is. The blood shed by the votaries of the God of mercy and peace, since the establishment of His religion, would probably suffice to drown all other sectaries now on the habitable globe. We derive from our ancestors a faith thus fostered and supported: we quarrel, persecute, and hate for its maintenance. Even under a government which, whilst it infringes the very right of thought and speech, boasts of permitting the liberty of the press, a man is pilloried and imprisoned because he is a deist, and no one raises his voice in the indignation of outraged humanity. But it is ever a proof that the falsehood of a proposition is felt by those who use coercion, not reasoning, to procure its admission; and a dispassionate observer would feel himself more powerfully interested in favour of a man who, depending on the truth of his opinions, simply stated his reasons for entertaining them, than in that of his aggressor who, daringly avowing his unwillingness or incapacity to answer them by argument, proceeded to repress the energies and break the spirit of their promulgator by that torture and imprisonment whose infliction he could command.

Analogy seems to favour the opinion

that as, like other systems, Christianity has arisen and augmented, so like them it will decay and perish; that as violence, darkness, and deceit, not reasoning and persuasion, have procured its admission among mankind, so, when enthusiasm has subsided, and time, that infallible controverter of false opinions, has involved its pretended evidences in the darkness of antiquity, it will become obsolete; that Milton's poem alone will give permanency to the remembrance of its absurdities; and that men will laugh as heartily at grace, faith, redemption, and original sin, as they now do at the metamorphoses of Jupiter, the miracles of Romish saints, the efficacy of witchcraft, and the appearance of departed spirits.

Had the Christian religion commenced and continued by the mere force of reasoning and persuasion, the preceding analogy would be inadmissible. We should never speculate on the future obsolescence of a system perfectly conformable to nature and reason: it would endure so long as they endured; it would be a truth as indisputable as the light of the sun, the criminality of murder, and other facts, whose evidence, depending on our organization and relative situations, must remain acknowledged as satisfactory so long as man is man. It is an incontrovertible fact, the consideration of which ought to repress the hasty conclusions of credulity, or moderate its obstinacy in maintaining them, that, had the Jews not been a fanatical race of men, had even the resolution of Pontius Pilate been equal to his candour, the Christian religion never could have prevailed, it could not even have existed: on so feeble a thread hangs the most cherished opinion of a sixth of the human race! When will the vulgar learn humility? When will the pride of ignorance blush at having believed before it could comprehend?

Either the Christian religion is true,

or it is false: if true, it comes from God, and its authenticity can admit of doubt and dispute no further than its omnipotent author is willing to allow. Either the power or the goodness of God is called in question, if He leaves those doctrines most essential to the well-being of man in doubt and dispute; the only ones which, since their promulgation, have been the subject of unceasing cavil, the cause of irreconcilable hatred. *If God has spoken, why is the universe not convinced?*

There is this passage in the Christian Scriptures: 'Those who obey not God, and believe not the Gospel of his Son, shall be punished with everlasting destruction.' This is the pivot upon which all religions turn: they all assume that it is in our power to believe or not to believe; whereas the mind can only believe that which it thinks true. A human being can only be supposed accountable for those actions which are influenced by his will. But belief is utterly distinct from and unconnected with volition: it is the apprehension of the agreement or disagreement of the ideas that compose any proposition. Belief is a passion, or involuntary operation of the mind, and, like other passions, its intensity is precisely proportionate to the degrees of excitement. Volition is essential to merit or demerit. But the Christian religion attaches the highest possible degrees of merit and demerit to that which is worthy of neither, and which is totally unconnected with the peculiar faculty of the mind, whose presence is essential to their being.

Christianity was intended to reform the world: had an all-wise Being planned it, nothing is more improbable than that it should have failed: omniscience would infallibly have foreseen the inutility of a scheme which experience demonstrates, to this age, to have been utterly unsuccessful.

Christianity inculcates the necessity of supplicating the Deity. Prayer may be considered under two points of view;—as an endeavour to change the intentions of God, or as a formal testimony of our obedience. But the former case supposes that the caprices of a limited intelligence can occasionally instruct the Creator of the world how to regulate the universe; and the latter, a certain degree of servility analogous to the loyalty demanded by earthly tyrants. Obedience indeed is only the pitiful and cowardly egotism of him who thinks that he can do something better than reason.

Christianity, like all other religions, rests upon miracles, prophecies, and martyrdoms. No religion ever existed which had not its prophets, its attested miracles, and, above all, crowds of devotees who would bear patiently the most horrible tortures to prove its authenticity. It should appear that in no case can a discriminating mind subscribe to the genuineness of a miracle. A miracle is an infraction of nature's law, by a supernatural cause; by a cause acting beyond that eternal circle within which all things are included. God breaks through the law of nature, that He may convince mankind of the truth of that revelation which, in spite of His precautions, has been, since its introduction, the subject of unceasing schism and cavil.

Miracles resolve themselves into the following question¹:—Whether it is more probable the laws of nature, hitherto so immutably harmonious, should have undergone violation, or that a man should have told a lie? Whether it is more probable that we are ignorant of the natural cause of an event, or that we know the supernatural one? That, in old times, when the powers of nature were less known than at present, a certain set of men were themselves deceived, or had some

¹ See Hume's *Essay*, vol. ii. p. 121.

hidden motive for deceiving others; or that God begat a Son, who, in His legislation, measuring merit by belief, evidenced Himself to be totally ignorant of the powers of the human mind—of what is voluntary, and what is the contrary?

We have many instances of men telling lies;—none of an infraction of nature's laws, those laws of whose government alone we have any knowledge or experience. The records of all nations afford innumerable instances of men deceiving others either from vanity or interest, or themselves being deceived by the limitedness of their views and their ignorance of natural causes: but where is the accredited case of God having come upon earth, to give the lie to His own creations? There would be something truly wonderful in the appearance of a ghost; but the assertion of a child that he saw one as he passed through the churchyard is universally admitted to be less miraculous.

But even supposing that a man should raise a dead body to life before our eyes, and on this fact rest his claim to being considered the son of God;—the Humane Society restores drowned persons, and because it makes no mystery of the method it employs, its members are not mistaken for the sons of God. All that we have a right to infer from our ignorance of the cause of any event is that we do not know it: had the Mexicans attended to this simple rule when they heard the cannon of the Spaniards, they would not have considered them as gods: the experiments of modern chemistry would have defied the wisest philosophers of ancient Greece and Rome to have accounted for them on natural principles. An author of strong common sense has observed that 'a miracle is no miracle at second-hand'; he might have added that a miracle is no miracle in any case; for until we are acquainted with all natural causes, we have no reason to imagine others.

There remains to be considered another proof of Christianity—Prophecy. A book is written before a certain event, in which this event is foretold; how could the prophet have foreknown it without inspiration? how could he have been inspired without God? The greatest stress is laid on the prophecies of Moses and Hosea on the dispersion of the Jews, and that of Isaiah concerning the coming of the Messiah. The prophecy of Moses is a collection of every possible cursing and blessing; and it is so far from being marvellous that the one of dispersion should have been fulfilled, that it would have been more surprising if, out of all these, none should have taken effect. In Deuteronomy, chap. xxviii. ver. 64, where Moses explicitly foretells the dispersion, he states that they shall there serve gods of wood and stone: 'And the Lord shall scatter thee among all people, from the one end of the earth even to the other; *and there thou shalt serve other gods, which neither thou nor thy fathers have known, even gods of wood and stone.*' The Jews are at this day remarkably tenacious of their religion. Moses also declares that they shall be subjected to these curses for disobedience to his ritual: 'And it shall come to pass, if thou wilt not hearken unto the voice of the Lord thy God, to observe to do all the commandments and statutes which I command thee this day; that all these curses shall come upon thee, and overtake thee.' Is this the real reason? The third, fourth, and fifth chapters of Hosea are a piece of immodest confession. The indelicate type might apply in a hundred senses to a hundred things. The fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is more explicit, yet it does not exceed in clearness the oracles of Delphos. The historical proof that Moses, Isaiah, and Hosea did write when they are said to have written is far from being clear and circumstantial.

But prophecy requires proof in its

character as a miracle; we have no right to suppose that a man foreknew future events from God, until it is demonstrated that he neither could know them by his own exertions, nor that the writings which contain the prediction could possibly have been fabricated after the event pretended to be foretold. It is more probable that writings, pretending to divine inspiration, should have been fabricated after the fulfilment of their pretended prediction than that they should have really been divinely inspired, when we consider that the latter supposition makes God at once the creator of the human mind and ignorant of its primary powers, particularly as we have numberless instances of false religions, and forged prophecies of things long past, and no accredited case of God having conversed with men directly or indirectly. It is also possible that the description of an event might have foregone its occurrence; but this is far from being a legitimate proof of a divine revelation, as many men, not pretending to the character of a prophet, have nevertheless, in this sense, prophesied.

Lord Chesterfield was never yet taken for a prophet, even by a bishop, yet he uttered this remarkable prediction: 'The despotic government of France is screwed up to the highest pitch; a revolution is fast approaching; that revolution, I am convinced, will be radical and sanguinary.' This appeared in the letters of the prophet long before the accomplishment of this wonderful prediction. Now, have these particulars come to pass, or have they not? If they have, how could the Earl have foreknown them without inspiration? If we admit the truth of the Christian religion on testimony such as this, we must admit, on the same strength of evidence, that God has affixed the highest rewards to belief, and the eternal tortures of the never-

dying worm to disbelief, both of which have been demonstrated to be involuntary.

The last proof of the Christian religion depends on the influence of the Holy Ghost. Theologians divide the influence of the Holy Ghost into its ordinary and extraordinary modes of operation. The latter is supposed to be that which inspired the Prophets and Apostles; and the former to be the grace of God, which summarily makes known the truth of His revelation to those whose mind is fitted for its reception by a submissive perusal of His word. Persons convinced in this manner can do anything but account for their conviction, describe the time at which it happened, or the manner in which it came upon them. It is supposed to enter the mind by other channels than those of the senses, and therefore professes to be superior to reason founded on their experience.

Admitting, however, the usefulness or possibility of a divine revelation, unless we demolish the foundations of all human knowledge, it is requisite that our reason should previously demonstrate its genuineness; for, before we extinguish the steady ray of reason and common sense, it is fit that we should discover whether we cannot do without their assistance, whether or no there be any other which may suffice to guide us through the labyrinth of life¹: for, if a man is to be inspired upon all occasions, if he is to be sure of a thing because he is sure, if the ordinary operations of the Spirit are not to be considered very extraordinary modes of demonstration, if enthusiasm is to usurp the place of proof, and madness that of sanity, all reasoning is superfluous. The Mahometan dies fighting for his prophet, the Indian immolates himself at the chariot-wheels of Brahma, the Hottentot worships an insect, the Negro a bunch of feathers,

¹ See Locke's *Essay on the Human Understanding*, book iv. chap. xix, on Enthusiasm.

the Mexican sacrifices human victims! Their degree of conviction must certainly be very strong: it cannot arise from reasoning, it must from feelings, the reward of their prayers. If each of these should affirm, in opposition to the strongest possible arguments, that inspiration carried internal evidence, I fear their inspired brethren, the orthodox missionaries, would be so uncharitable as to pronounce them obstinate.

Miracles cannot be received as testimonies of a disputed fact, because all human testimony has ever been insufficient to establish the possibility of miracles. That which is incapable of proof itself is no proof of anything else. Prophecy has also been rejected by the test of reason. Those, then, who have been actually inspired are the only true believers in the Christian religion.

Mox numine viso
Virginei tumuere sinus, innuptaque
mater
Arcano stupuit compleri viscera partu,
Auctorem paritura suum. Mortalia
corda
Artificem texere poli, latuitque sub uno
Pectore, qui totum late complectitur
orbem.

Claudian, *Carmen Paschale*.

Does not so monstrous and disgusting an absurdity carry its own infamy and refutation with itself?

VIII. 203-207:—

*Him, still from hope to hope the bliss
pursuing
Which from the exhaustless lore of
human weal
Draws on the virtuous mind, the
thoughts that rise
In time-destroying infiniteness, gift
With self-enshrined eternity, etc.*

Time is our consciousness of the succession of ideas in our mind. Vivid sensation, of either pain or pleasure, makes the time seem long, as the common phrase is, because it renders us

more acutely conscious of our ideas. If a mind be conscious of an hundred ideas during one minute, by the clock, and of two hundred during another, the latter of these spaces would actually occupy so much greater extent in the mind as two exceed one in quantity. If, therefore, the human mind, by any future improvement of its sensibility, should become conscious of an infinite number of ideas in a minute, that minute would be eternity. I do not hence infer that the actual space between the birth and death of a man will ever be prolonged; but that his sensibility is perfectible, and that the number of ideas which his mind is capable of receiving is indefinite. One man is stretched on the rack during twelve hours; another sleeps soundly in his bed: the difference of time perceived by these two persons is immense; one hardly will believe that half an hour has elapsed, the other could credit that centuries had flown during his agony. Thus, the life of a man of virtue and talent, who should die in his thirtieth year, is, with regard to his own feelings, longer than that of a miserable priest-ridden slave, who dreams out a century of dulness. The one has perpetually cultivated his mental faculties, has rendered himself master of his thoughts, can abstract and generalize amid the lethargy of every-day business;—the other can slumber over the brightest moments of his being, and is unable to remember the happiest hour of his life. Perhaps the perishing ephemeron enjoys a longer life than the tortoise.

Dark flood of time!

Roll as it listeth thee—I measure not
By months or moments thy ambiguous
course.

Another may stand by me on the
brink

And watch the bubble whirled beyond
his ken

That pauses at my feet. The sense of
love,

The thirst for action, and the impassioned thought
 Prolong my being: if I wake no more,
 My life more actual living will contain
 Than some gray veteran's of the world's
 cold school,
 Whose listless hours unprofitably roll,
 By one enthusiast feeling unredeemed.

See Godwin's *Pol. Jus.* vol. i, p. 411; and Condorcet, *Esquisse d'un Tableau Historique des Progrès de l'Esprit Humain*, époque ix.

VIII. 211, 212:—

*No longer now
 He slays the lamb that looks him in the
 face.*

I hold that the depravity of the physical and moral nature of man originated in his unnatural habits of life. The origin of man, like that of the universe of which he is a part, is enveloped in impenetrable mystery. His generations either had a beginning, or they had not. The weight of evidence in favour of each of these suppositions seems tolerably equal; and it is perfectly unimportant to the present argument which is assumed. The language spoken, however, by the mythology of nearly all religions seems to prove that at some distant period man forsook the path of nature, and sacrificed the purity and happiness of his being to unnatural appetites. The date of this event seems to have also been that of some great change in the climates of the earth, with which it has an obvious correspondence. The allegory of Adam and Eve eating of the tree of evil, and entailing upon their posterity the wrath of God and the loss of everlasting life, admits of no other explanation than the disease and crime that have flowed from unnatural diet. Milton was so well aware of this that he makes Raphael thus exhibit to Adam the consequence of his disobedience:—

Immediately a place
 Before his eyes appeared, sad, noisome,
 dark;
 A lazarus-house it seemed; wherein were
 laid
 Numbers of all diseased—all maladies
 Of ghastly spasm, or racking torture,
 qualms
 Of heart-sick agony, all feverous kinds,
 Convulsions, epilepsies, fierce catarrhs,
 Intestine stone and ulcer, colic pangs,
 Demoniac frenzy, moping melancholy,
 And moon-struck madness, pining
 atrophy,
 Marasmus, and wide-wasting pestilence,
 Dropsies and asthmas, and joint-racking
 rheums.

And how many thousands more might not be added to this frightful catalogue!

The story of Prometheus is one likewise which, although universally admitted to be allegorical, has never been satisfactorily explained. Prometheus stole fire from heaven, and was chained for this crime to Mount Caucasus, where a vulture continually devoured his liver, that grew to meet its hunger. Hesiod says that, before the time of Prometheus, mankind were exempt from suffering; that they enjoyed a vigorous youth, and that death, when at length it came, approached like sleep, and gently closed their eyes. Again, so general was this opinion that Horace, a poet of the Augustan age, writes—

Audax omnia perpeti,
 Gens humana ruit per vetitum nefas;
 Audax Iapeti genus
 Ignem fraude malâ gentibus intulit:
 Post ignem aetheriâ domo
 Subductum, macies et nova febrium
 Terris incubuit cohors,
 Semotique prius tarda necessitas
 Lethi corripuit gradum.

How plain a language is spoken by all this! Prometheus (who represents the

human race) effected some great change in the condition of his nature, and applied fire to culinary purposes; thus inventing an expedient for screening from his disgust the horrors of the shambles. From this moment his vitals were devoured by the vulture of disease. It consumed his being in every shape of its loathsome and infinite variety, inducing the soul-quelling sinkings of premature and violent death. All vice rose from the ruin of healthful innocence. Tyranny, superstition, commerce, and inequality were then first known, when reason vainly attempted to guide the wanderings of exacerbated passion. I conclude this part of the subject with an extract from Mr. Newton's *Defence of Vegetable Regimen*, from whom I have borrowed this interpretation of the fable of Prometheus.

'Making allowance for such transposition of the events of the allegory as time might produce after the important truths were forgotten, which this portion of the ancient mythology was intended to transmit, the drift of the fable seems to be this:—Man at his creation was endowed with the gift of perpetual youth; that is, he was not formed to be a sickly suffering creature as we now see him, but to enjoy health, and to sink by slow degrees into the bosom of his parent earth without disease or pain. Prometheus first taught the use of animal food (*primus bovem occidit Prometheus*¹) and of fire, with which to render it more digestible and pleasing to the taste. Jupiter, and the rest of the gods, foreseeing the consequences of these inventions, were amused or irritated at the short-sighted devices of the newly-formed creature, and left him to experience the sad effects of them. Thirst, the necessary concomitant of a flesh diet' (perhaps of all diet vitiated by culinary preparation), 'ensued; water was resorted to, and man forfeited the inestimable gift

of health which he had received from heaven: he became diseased, the partaker of a precarious existence, and no longer descended slowly to his grave².'

But just disease to luxury succeeds,
And every death its own avenger
breeds;

The fury passions from that blood
began,

And turned on man a fiercer savage—
man.

Man, and the animals whom he has infected with his society, or depraved by his dominion, are alone diseased. The wild hog, the mouflon, the bison, and the wolf, are perfectly exempt from malady, and invariably die either from external violence or natural old age. But the domestic hog, the sheep, the cow, and the dog, are subject to an incredible variety of distempers; and, like the corrupters of their nature, have physicians who thrive upon their miseries. The supereminence of man is like Satan's, a supereminence of pain; and the majority of his species, doomed to penury, disease, and crime, have reason to curse the untoward event that, by enabling him to communicate his sensations, raised him above the level of his fellow-animals. But the steps that have been taken are irrevocable. The whole of human science is comprised in one question:—How can the advantages of intellect and civilization be reconciled with the liberty and pure pleasures of natural life? How can we take the benefits and reject the evils of the system, which is now interwoven with all the fibres of our being?—I believe that abstinence from animal food and spirituous liquors would in a great measure capacitate us for the solution of this important question.

It is true that mental and bodily derangement is attributable in part to other deviations from rectitude and

¹ Plin. *Nat. Hist.* lib. vii. sect. 57.

² *Return to Nature.* Cadell, 1811.

nature than those which concern diet. The mistakes cherished by society respecting the connection of the sexes, whence the misery and diseases of unsatisfied celibacy, unenjoying prostitution, and the premature arrival of puberty, necessarily spring; the putrid atmosphere of crowded cities; the exhalations of chemical processes; the muffling of our bodies in superfluous apparel; the absurd treatment of infants:—all these and innumerable other causes contribute their mite to the mass of human evil.

Comparative anatomy teaches us that man resembles frugivorous animals in everything, and carnivorous in nothing; he has neither claws wherewith to seize his prey, nor distinct and pointed teeth to tear the living fibre. A Mandarin of the first class, with nails two inches long, would probably find them alone inefficient to hold even a hare. After every subterfuge of gluttony, the bull must be degraded into the ox, and the ram into the wether, by an unnatural and inhuman operation, that the flaccid fibre may offer a fainter resistance to rebellious nature. It is only by softening and disguising dead flesh by culinary preparation that it is rendered susceptible of mastication or digestion; and that the sight of its bloody juices and raw horror does not excite intolerable loathing and disgust. Let the advocate of animal food force himself to a decisive experiment on its fitness, and, as Plutarch recommends, tear a living lamb with his teeth, and plunging his head into its vitals slake his thirst with the steaming blood; when fresh from the deed of horror, let him revert to the irresistible instincts of nature that would rise in judgement against it, and say, 'Nature formed me for such work as this.' Then, and then only, would he be consistent.

Man resembles no carnivorous animal. There is no exception, unless

man be one, to the rule of herbivorous animals having cellulated colons.

The orang-outang perfectly resembles man both in the order and number of his teeth. The orang-outang is the most anthropomorphous of the ape tribe, all of which are strictly frugivorous. There is no other species of animals, which live on different food, in which this analogy exists¹. In many frugivorous animals, the canine teeth are more pointed and distinct than those of man. The resemblance also of the human stomach to that of the orang-outang is greater than to that of any other animal.

The intestines are also identical with those of herbivorous animals, which present a larger surface for absorption and have ample and cellulated colons. The caecum also, though short, is larger than that of carnivorous animals; and even here the orang-outang retains its accustomed similarity.

The structure of the human frame, then, is that of one fitted to a pure vegetable diet, in every essential particular. It is true that the reluctance to abstain from animal food, in those who have been long accustomed to its stimulus, is so great in some persons of weak minds as to be scarcely overcome; but this is far from bringing any argument in its favour. A lamb, which was fed for some time on flesh by a ship's crew, refused its natural diet at the end of the voyage. There are numerous instances of horses, sheep, oxen, and even wood-pigeons, having been taught to live upon flesh, until they have loathed their natural aliment. Young children evidently prefer pastry, oranges, apples, and other fruit, to the flesh of animals; until, by the gradual deprivation of the digestive organs, the free use of vegetables has for a time produced serious inconveniences; *for a time*, I say, since there never was an instance

¹ Cuvier, *Leçons d'Anat. Comp.* tom. iii, pp. 169, 373, 448, 465, 480. Rees's *Cyclopaedia*, art. Man.

wherein a change from spirituous liquors and animal food to vegetables and pure water has failed ultimately to invigorate the body, by rendering its juices bland and consentaneous, and to restore to the mind that cheerfulness and elasticity which not one in fifty possesses on the present system. A love of strong liquors is also with difficulty taught to infants. Almost every one remembers the wry faces which the first glass of port produced. Unsophisticated instinct is invariably unerring; but to decide on the fitness of animal food from the perverted appetites which its constrained adoption produces, is to make the criminal a judge in his own cause: it is even worse, it is appealing to the infatuated drunkard in a question of the salubrity of brandy.

What is the cause of morbid action in the animal system? Not the air we breathe, for our fellow-denizens of nature breathe the same uninjured; not the water we drink (if remote from the pollutions of man and his inventions¹), for the animals drink it too; not the earth we tread upon; not the unobscured sight of glorious nature, in the wood, the field, or the expanse of sky and ocean; nothing that we are or do in common with the undiseased inhabitants of the forest. Something, then, wherein we differ from them: our habit of altering our food by fire, so that our appetite is no longer a just criterion for the fitness of its gratification. Except in children, there remain no traces of that instinct which determines, in all other animals, what aliment is natural or otherwise; and so perfectly obliterated are they in the reasoning adults of our species, that it has become necessary to urge considerations drawn from comparative anatomy to prove that we are naturally frugivorous.

Crime is madness. Madness is disease. Whenever the cause of disease shall be discovered, the root, from which all vice and misery have so long overshadowed the globe, will lie bare to the axe. All the exertions of man, from that moment, may be considered as tending to the clear profit of his species. No sane mind in a sane body resolves upon a real crime. It is a man of violent passions, bloodshot eyes, and swollen veins, that alone can grasp the knife of murder. The system of a simple diet promises no Utopian advantages. It is no mere reform of legislation, whilst the furious passions and evil propensities of the human heart, in which it had its origin, are still unassuaged. It strikes at the root of all evil, and is an experiment which may be tried with success, not alone by nations, but by small societies, families, and even individuals. In no cases has a return to vegetable diet produced the slightest injury; in most it has been attended with changes undeniably beneficial. Should ever a physician be born with the genius of Locke, I am persuaded that he might trace all bodily and mental derangements to our unnatural habits, as clearly as that philosopher has traced all knowledge to sensation. What prolific sources of disease are not those mineral and vegetable poisons that have been introduced for its extirpation! How many thousands have become murderers and robbers, bigots and domestic tyrants, dissolute and abandoned adventurers, from the use of fermented liquors; who, had they slaked their thirst only with pure water, would have lived but to diffuse the happiness of their own unperverted feelings! How many groundless opinions and absurd institutions have not received a general sanction from the

¹ The necessity of resorting to some means of purifying water, and the disease which arises from its adulteration in civilized countries, is sufficiently apparent. See Dr. Lambe's *Reports on Cancer*. I do not assert that the use of water is in itself unnatural, but that the unperverted palate would swallow no liquid capable of occasioning disease.

sottishness and intemperance of individuals! Who will assert that, had the populace of Paris satisfied their hunger at the ever-furnished table of vegetable nature, they would have lent their brutal suffrage to the proscription-list of Robespierre? Could a set of men, whose passions were not perverted by unnatural stimuli, look with coolness on an *auto da fé*? Is it to be believed that a being of gentle feelings, rising from his meal of roots, would take delight in sports of blood? Was Nero a man of temperate life? Could you read calm health in his cheek, flushed with ungovernable propensities of hatred for the human race? Did Muley Ismael's pulse beat evenly, was his skin transparent, did his eyes beam with healthfulness, and its invariable concomitants, cheerfulness and benignity? Though history has decided none of these questions, a child could not hesitate to answer in the negative. Surely the bile-suffused cheek of Buonaparte, his wrinkled brow, and yellow eye, the ceaseless inquietude of his nervous system, speak no less plainly the character of his unresting ambition than his murders and his victories. It is impossible, had Buonaparte descended from a race of vegetable feeders, that he could have had either the inclination or the power to ascend the throne of the Bourbons. The desire of tyranny could scarcely be excited in the individual, the power to tyrannize would certainly not be delegated by a society neither frenzied by inebriation nor rendered impotent and irrational by disease. Pregnant indeed with inexhaustible calamity is the renunciation of instinct, as it concerns our physical nature; arithmetic cannot enumerate, nor reason perhaps suspect, the multitudinous sources of disease in civilized life. Even common water, that apparently innocuous pabulum, when corrupted by the filth of

populous cities, is a deadly and insidious destroyer¹. Who can wonder that all the inducements held out by God Himself in the Bible to virtue should have been vainer than a nurse's tale; and that those dogmas, by which He has there excited and justified the most ferocious propensities, should have alone been deemed essential; whilst Christians are in the daily practice of all those habits which have infected with disease and crime, not only the reprobate sons, but these favoured children of the common Father's love? Omnipotence itself could not save them from the consequences of this original and universal sin.

There is no disease, bodily or mental, which adoption of vegetable diet and pure water has not infallibly mitigated, wherever the experiment has been fairly tried. Debility is gradually converted into strength; disease into healthfulness; madness, in all its hideous variety, from the ravings of the fettered maniac to the unaccountable irrationalities of ill-temper, that make a hell of domestic life, into a calm and considerate evenness of temper, that alone might offer a certain pledge of the future moral reformation of society. On a natural system of diet, old age would be our last and our only malady; the term of our existence would be protracted; we should enjoy life, and no longer preclude others from the enjoyment of it; all sensational delights would be infinitely more exquisite and perfect; the very sense of being would then be a continued pleasure, such as we now feel it in some few and favoured moments of our youth. By all that is sacred in our hopes for the human race, I conjure those who love happiness and truth to give a fair trial to the vegetable system. Reasoning is surely superfluous on a subject whose merits an experience of six months would set for ever at rest.

¹ Lambe's *Reports on Cancer*.

But it is only among the enlightened and benevolent that so great a sacrifice of appetite and prejudice can be expected, even though its ultimate excellence should not admit of dispute. It is found easier, by the short-sighted victims of disease, to palliate their torments by medicine than to prevent them by regimen. The vulgar of all ranks are invariably sensual and in-docile; yet I cannot but feel myself persuaded that when the benefits of vegetable diet are mathematically proved, when it is as clear that those who live naturally are exempt from premature death as that nine is not one, the most sottish of mankind will feel a preference towards a long and tranquil, contrasted with a short and painful, life. On the average, out of sixty persons four die in three years. Hopes are entertained that, in April, 1814, a statement will be given that sixty persons, all having lived more than three years on vegetables and pure water, are then *in perfect health*. More than two years have now elapsed; *not one of them has died*; no such example will be found in any sixty persons taken at random. Seventeen persons of all ages (the families of Dr. Lambe and Mr. Newton) have lived for seven years on this diet without a death, and almost without the slightest illness. Surely, when we consider that some of these were infants, and one a martyr to asthma now nearly subdued, we may challenge any seventeen persons taken at random in this city to exhibit a parallel case. Those who may have been excited to question the rectitude of established habits of diet by these loose remarks, should consult Mr. Newton's luminous and eloquent essay¹.

When these proofs come fairly before the world, and are clearly seen by all who understand arithmetic, it is scarcely possible that abstinence

from aliments demonstrably pernicious should not become universal. In proportion to the number of proselytes, so will be the weight of evidence; and when a thousand persons can be produced, living on vegetables and distilled water, who have to dread no disease but old age, the world will be compelled to regard animal flesh and fermented liquors as slow but certain poisons. The change which would be produced by simpler habits on political economy is sufficiently remarkable. The monopolizing eater of animal flesh would no longer destroy his constitution by devouring an acre at a meal, and many loaves of bread would cease to contribute to gout, madness and apoplexy, in the shape of a pint of porter, or a dram of gin, when appeasing the long-protracted famine of the hard-working peasant's hungry babes. The quantity of nutritious vegetable matter, consumed in fattening the carcase of an ox, would afford ten times the sustenance, undepraving indeed, and incapable of generating disease, if gathered immediately from the bosom of the earth. The most fertile districts of the habitable globe are now actually cultivated by men for animals, at a delay and waste of aliment absolutely incapable of calculation. It is only the wealthy that can, to any great degree, even now, indulge the unnatural craving for dead flesh, and they pay for the greater licence of the privilege by subjection to supernumerary diseases. Again, the spirit of the nation that should take the lead in this great reform would insensibly become agricultural; commerce, with all its vice, selfishness, and corruption, would gradually decline; more natural habits would produce gentler manners, and the excessive complication of political relations would be so far simplified that every individual might feel and understand why he loved his country, and took a personal

¹ *Return to Nature, or Defence of Vegetable Regimen.* Cadell, 1811.

interest in its welfare. How would England, for example, depend on the caprices of foreign rulers if she contained within herself all the necessities, and despised whatever they possessed of the luxuries, of life? How could they starve her into compliance with their views? Of what consequence would it be that they refused to take her woollen manufactures, when large and fertile tracts of the island ceased to be allotted to the waste of pasturage? On a natural system of diet we should require no spices from India; no wines from Portugal, Spain, France, or Madeira; none of those multitudinous articles of luxury, for which every corner of the globe is rifled, and which are the causes of so much individual rivalry, such calamitous and sanguinary national disputes. In the history of modern times, the avarice of commercial monopoly, no less than the ambition of weak and wicked chiefs, seems to have fomented the universal discord, to have added stubbornness to the mistakes of cabinets, and indolence to the infatuation of the people. Let it ever be remembered that it is the direct influence of commerce to make the interval between the richest and the poorest man wider and more unconquerable. Let it be remembered that it is a foe to everything of real worth and excellence in the human character. The odious and disgusting aristocracy of wealth is built upon the ruins of all that is good in chivalry or republicanism; and luxury is the fore-runner of a barbarism scarce capable of cure. Is it impossible to realize a state of society, where all the energies of man shall be directed to the production of his solid happiness? Certainly, if this advantage (the object of all

political speculation) be in any degree attainable, it is attainable only by a community which holds out no factitious incentives to the avarice and ambition of the few, and which is internally organized for the liberty, security, and comfort of the many. None must be entrusted with power (and money is the completest species of power) who do not stand pledged to use it exclusively for the general benefit. But the use of animal flesh and fermented liquors directly militates with this equality of the rights of man. The peasant cannot gratify these fashionable cravings without leaving his family to starve. Without disease and war, those sweeping curtailers of population, pasturage would include a waste too great to be afforded. The labour requisite to support a family is far lighter¹ than is usually supposed. The peasantry work, not only for themselves, but for the aristocracy, the army, and the manufacturers.

The advantage of a reform in diet is obviously greater than that of any other. It strikes at the root of the evil. To remedy the abuses of legislation, before we annihilate the propensities by which they are produced, is to suppose that by taking away the effect the cause will cease to operate. But the efficacy of this system depends entirely on the proselytism of individuals, and grounds its merits, as a benefit to the community, upon the total change of the dietetic habits in its members. It proceeds securely from a number of particular cases to one that is universal, and has this advantage over the contrary mode, that one error does not invalidate all that has gone before.

Let not too much, however, be expected from this system. The healthiest

¹ It has come under the author's experience that some of the workmen on an embankment in North Wales, who, in consequence of the inability of the proprietor to pay them, seldom received their wages, have supported large families by cultivating small spots of sterile ground by moonlight. In the notes to Pratt's poem, *Bread, or the Poor*, is an account of an industrious labourer who, by working in a small garden, before and after his day's task, attained to an enviable state of independence.

among us is not exempt from hereditary disease. The most symmetrical, athletic, and longlived is a being inexpressibly inferior to what he would have been, had not the unnatural habits of his ancestors accumulated for him a certain portion of malady and deformity. In the most perfect specimen of civilized man, something is still found wanting by the physiological critic. Can a return to nature, then, instantaneously eradicate predispositions that have been slowly taking root in the silence of innumerable ages?—Indubitably not. All that I contend for is, that from the moment of the relinquishing all unnatural habits no new disease is generated; and that the predisposition to hereditary maladies gradually perishes, for want of its accustomed supply. In cases of consumption, cancer, gout, asthma, and scrofula, such is the invariable tendency of a diet of vegetables and pure water.

Those who may be induced by these remarks to give the vegetable system a fair trial, should, in the first place, date the commencement of their practice from the moment of their conviction. All depends upon breaking through a pernicious habit resolutely and at once. Dr. Trotter¹ asserts that no drunkard was ever reformed by gradually relinquishing his dram. Animal flesh, in its effects on the human stomach, is analogous to a dram. It is similar in the kind, though differing in the degree, of its operation. The proselyte to a pure diet must be warned to expect a temporary diminution of muscular strength. The subtraction of a powerful stimulus will suffice to account for this event. But it is only temporary, and is succeeded by an equable capability for exertion, far surpassing his former various and fluctuating strength. Above all, he will acquire an easiness of breathing, by which such exertion is performed, with

a remarkable exemption from that painful and difficult panting now felt by almost every one after hastily climbing an ordinary mountain. He will be equally capable of bodily exertion, or mental application, after as before his simple meal. He will feel none of the narcotic effects of ordinary diet. Irritability, the direct consequence of exhausting stimuli, would yield to the power of natural and tranquil impulses. He will no longer pine under the lethargy of ennui, that unconquerable weariness of life, more to be dreaded than death itself. He will escape the epidemic madness, which broods over its own injurious notions of the Deity, and ‘realizes the hell that priests and beldams feign.’ Every man forms, as it were, his god from his own character; to the divinity of one of simple habits no offering would be more acceptable than the happiness of his creatures. He would be incapable of hating or persecuting others for the love of God. He will find, moreover, a system of simple diet to be a system of perfect epicurism. He will no longer be incessantly occupied in blunting and destroying those organs from which he expects his gratification. The pleasures of taste to be derived from a dinner of potatoes, beans, peas, turnips, lettuces, with a dessert of apples, gooseberries, strawberries, currants, raspberries, and in winter, oranges, apples and pears, is far greater than is supposed. Those who wait until they can eat this plain fare with the sauce of appetite will scarcely join with the hypocritical sensualist at a lord-mayor’s feast, who declaims against the pleasures of the table. Solomon kept a thousand concubines, and owned in despair that all was vanity. The man whose happiness is constituted by the society of one amiable woman would find some difficulty in sympathizing with the disappointment of this venerable debauchee.

¹ See Trotter on the Nervous Temperament.

I address myself not only to the young enthusiast, the ardent devotee of truth and virtue, the pure and passionate moralist, yet unvitiated by the contagion of the world. He will embrace a pure system, from its abstract truth, its beauty, its simplicity, and its promise of wide-extended benefit; unless custom has turned poison into food, he will hate the brutal pleasures of the chase by instinct; it will be a contemplation full of horror, and disappointment to his mind, that beings capable of the gentlest and most admirable sympathies should take delight in the death-pangs and last convulsions of dying animals. The elderly man, whose youth has been poisoned by intemperance, or who has lived with apparent moderation, and is afflicted with a variety of painful maladies, would find his account in a beneficial change produced without the risk of poisonous medicines. The mother, to whom the perpetual restlessness of disease and unaccountable deaths incident to her children are the causes of incurable unhappiness, would on this diet experience the satisfaction of beholding their perpetual healths and natural playfulness¹. The most valuable lives are daily destroyed by diseases that it is dangerous to palliate and impossible to cure by medicine. How much longer will man continue to pimp for the gluttony of Death, his most insidious, implacable, and eternal foe?

Ἀλλὰ δράκοντας ἀγρίους καλεῖτε καὶ παρδάλεις καὶ λέοντας, αὐτοὶ δὲ μαιφονεῖτε εἰς ὠμότητα καταλιπόντες ἐκείνους

οὐδέν· ἐκείνοις μὲν γὰρ ὁ φόνος τροφή, ὑμῖν δὲ ὄψων ἐστίν. . . . Ὅτι γὰρ οὐκ ἔστιν ἀνθρώπῳ κατὰ φύσιν τὸ σαρκοφαγεῖν, πρῶτον μὲν ἀπὸ τῶν σωματῶν δηλοῦται τῆς κατασκευῆς. Οὐδενὶ γὰρ ἔοικε τὸ ἀνθρώπῳ σῶμα τῶν ἐπὶ σαρκοφαγία γεγονότων, οὐ γρυπότης χεῖλους, οὐκ ὀξύτης ὄνυχος, οὐ τραχύτης ὀδόντος πρόσσεστι, οὐ κοιλίας εὐτονία καὶ πνεύματος θερμότης, τρέψαι καὶ κατεργάσασθαι δυνατὴ τὸ βαρὺ καὶ κρεῶδες· ἀλλ' αὐτόθεν ἡ φύσις τῇ λειότητι τῶν ὀδόντων καὶ τῇ σμικρότητι τοῦ στόματος καὶ τῇ μαλακότητι τῆς γλώσσης καὶ τῇ πρὸς πέψιν ἀμβλύτητι τοῦ πνεύματος, ἐξόμενται τὴν σαρκοφαγίαν. Εἰ δὲ λέγεις πεφυκέναι σεαυτὸν ἐπὶ τοιαύτῃ ἐδωδῇ, ὃ βούλει φαγεῖν πρῶτον αὐτὸς ἀπόκτεινον, ἀλλ' αὐτὸς διὰ σεαυτοῦ, μὴ χρησάμενος κοπίδι μηδὲ τυμπάνῳ τινὶ μηδὲ πελέκει· ἀλλὰ, ὥς λύκοι καὶ ἄρκτοι καὶ λέοντες αὐτοὶ ὅσα ἐσθίουσι φονεύουσιν, ἄνελε δῆγματι βοῦν ἢ στόματι σὺν, ἢ ἄρνα ἢ λαγῶν διάρρηξον καὶ φάγε προσπεσῶν ἐτι ζῶντος, ὥς ἐκεῖνα. . . . Ἡμεῖς δ' οὕτως ἐν τῷ μαιφόνῳ τρυφούμεν, ὥστ' ὄψων τὸ κρέας προσαγορεύομεν, εἰτ' ὄψων πρὸς αὐτὸ τὸ κρέας δεόμεθα, ἀναμειγνύντες ἔλαιον οἶνον μέλι γάρον ὄξος ἡδύσμασι Συριακοῖς Ἀραβικοῖς, ὥσπερ ὄντως νεκρὸν ἐνταφιάζοντες. Ἰκαὶ γὰρ οὕτως αὐτῶν διαλυθέντων καὶ μαλαχθέντων καὶ τρόπον τινὰ προσαπέντων ἔργον ἐστὶ τὴν πέψιν κρατῆσαι, καὶ διακρατηθεῖσθαι δὲ δεινὰς βαρύντητας ἐμποιεῖ καὶ νοσώδεις ἀπεψίας. . . . Οὕτω τὸ πρῶτον ἀγρίον τι ζῶον ἐβρώθη καὶ κακοῦργον, εἰτ' ὄρνις τις ἢ ἰχθὺς εἰλκυστο· καὶ γευσάμενον οὕτω καὶ

¹ See Mr. Newton's book. His children are the most beautiful and healthy creatures it is possible to conceive; the girls are perfect models for a sculptor; their dispositions are also the most gentle and conciliating; the judicious treatment, which they experience in other points, may be a correlative cause of this. In the first five years of their life, of 18,000 children that are born, 7,500 die of various diseases; and how many more of those that survive are not rendered miserable by maladies not immediately mortal? The quality and quantity of a woman's milk are materially injured by the use of dead flesh. In an island near Iceland, where no vegetables are to be got, the children invariably die of tetanus before they are three weeks old, and the population is supplied from the mainland.—Sir G. Mackenzie's *Hist. of Iceland*. See also *Émile*, chap. i, pp. 53, 54, 56.

προμελετήσαν ἐν ἐκείνοις τὸ φονικὸν
ἐπὶ βοῦν ἐργάτην ἦλθε καὶ τὸ κόσμιον
πρόβατον καὶ τὸν οἰκουρὸν ἄλεκτρονα·
καὶ κατὰ μικρὸν οὕτω τὴν ἀπλησίαν
στομύσαντες ἐπὶ σφαγὰς ἀνθρώπων
καὶ πολέμους καὶ φόνους προῆλθον.—
Πλούτ. περὶ τῆς Σαρκοφαγίας.

NOTE ON QUEEN MAB, BY
MRS. SHELLEY

SHELLEY was eighteen when he wrote *Queen Mab*; he never published it. When it was written, he had come to the decision that he was too young to be a 'judge of controversies'; and he was desirous of acquiring 'that sobriety of spirit which is the characteristic of true heroism.' But he never doubted the truth or utility of his opinions; and, in printing and privately distributing *Queen Mab*, he believed that he should further their dissemination, without occasioning the mischief either to others or himself that might arise from publication. It is doubtful whether he would himself have admitted it into a collection of his works. His severe classical taste, refined by the constant study of the Greek poets, might have discovered defects that escape the ordinary reader; and the change his opinions underwent in many points would have prevented him from putting forth the speculations of his boyish days. But the poem is too beautiful in itself, and far too remarkable as the production of a boy of eighteen, to allow of its being passed over: besides that, having been frequently reprinted, the omission would be vain. In the former edition certain portions were left out, as shocking the general reader from the violence of their attack on religion. I myself had a painful feeling that such erasures might be looked upon as a mark of disrespect towards the author, and am glad to have the opportunity of restoring them. The notes also are reprinted entire—not because they are

models of reasoning or lessons of truth, but because Shelley wrote them, and that all that a man at once so distinguished and so excellent ever did deserves to be preserved. The alterations his opinions underwent ought to be recorded, for they form his history.

A series of articles was published in the *New Monthly Magazine* during the autumn of the year 1832, written by a man of great talent, a fellow-collegian and warm friend of Shelley: they describe admirably the state of his mind during his collegiate life. Inspired with ardour for the acquisition of knowledge, endowed with the keenest sensibility and with the fortitude of a martyr, Shelley came among his fellow-creatures, congregated for the purposes of education, like a spirit from another sphere; too delicately organized for the rough treatment man uses towards man, especially in the season of youth, and too resolute in carrying out his own sense of good and justice, not to become a victim. To a devoted attachment to those he loved he added a determined resistance to oppression. Refusing to fag at Eton, he was treated with revolting cruelty by masters and boys: this roused instead of taming his spirit, and he rejected the duty of obedience when it was enforced by menaces and punishment. To aversion to the society of his fellow-creatures, such as he found them when collected together in societies, where one egged-on the other to acts of tyranny, was joined the deepest sympathy and compassion; while the attachment he felt for individuals, and the admiration with which he regarded their powers and their virtues, led him to entertain a high opinion of the perfectibility of human nature; and he believed that all could reach the highest grade of moral improvement, did not the customs and prejudices of society foster evil passions and excuse evil actions.

The oppression which, trembling at

every nerve yet resolute to heroism, it was his ill-fortune to encounter at school and at college, led him to dissent in all things from those whose arguments were blows, whose faith appeared to engender blame and hatred. 'During my existence,' he wrote to a friend in 1812, 'I have incessantly speculated, thought, and read.' His readings were not always well chosen; among them were the works of the French philosophers: as far as metaphysical argument went, he temporarily became a convert. At the same time, it was the cardinal article of his faith that, if men were but taught and induced to treat their fellows with love, charity, and equal rights, this earth would realize paradise. He looked upon religion, as it is professed, and above all practised, as hostile instead of friendly to the cultivation of those virtues which would make men brothers.

Can this be wondered at? At the age of seventeen, fragile in health and frame, of the purest habits in morals, full of devoted generosity and universal kindness, glowing with ardour to attain wisdom, resolved at every personal sacrifice to do right, burning with a desire for affection and sympathy,—he was treated as a reprobate, cast forth as a criminal.

The cause was that he was sincere; that he believed the opinions which he entertained to be true. And he loved truth with a martyr's love; he was ready to sacrifice station and fortune, and his dearest affections, at its shrine. The sacrifice was demanded from, and made by, a youth of seventeen. It is a singular fact in the history of society in the civilized nations of modern times that no false step is so irretrievable as one made in early youth. Older men, it is true, when they oppose their fellows and transgress ordinary rules, carry a certain prudence or hypocrisy as a shield along with them. But youth is rash; nor can it imagine, while

asserting what it believes to be true, and doing what it believes to be right, that it should be denounced as vicious, and pursued as a criminal.

Shelley possessed a quality of mind which experience has shown me to be of the rarest occurrence among human beings: this was his *unworldliness*. The usual motives that rule men, prospects of present or future advantage, the rank and fortune of those around, the taunts and censures, or the praise, of those who were hostile to him, had no influence whatever over his actions, and apparently none over his thoughts. It is difficult even to express the simplicity and directness of purpose that adorned him. Some few might be found in the history of mankind, and some one at least among his own friends, equally disinterested and scornful, even to severe personal sacrifices, of every baser motive. But no one, I believe, ever joined this noble but passive virtue to equal active endeavours for the benefit of his friends and mankind in general, and to equal power to produce the advantages he desired. The world's brightest gauds and its most solid advantages were of no worth in his eyes, when compared to the cause of what he considered truth, and the good of his fellow-creatures. Born in a position which, to his inexperienced mind, afforded the greatest facilities to practise the tenets he espoused, he boldly declared the use he would make of fortune and station, and enjoyed the belief that he should materially benefit his fellow-creatures by his actions; while, conscious of surpassing powers of reason and imagination, it is not strange that he should, even while so young, have believed that his written thoughts would tend to disseminate opinions which he believed conducive to the happiness of the human race.

If man were a creature devoid of passion, he might have said and done

all this with quietness. But he was too enthusiastic, and too full of hatred of all the ills he witnessed, not to scorn danger. Various disappointments tortured, but could not tame, his soul. The more enmity he met, the more earnestly he became attached to his peculiar views, and hostile to those of the men who persecuted him.

He was animated to greater zeal by compassion for his fellow-creatures. His sympathy was excited by the misery with which the world is burning. He witnessed the sufferings of the poor, and was aware of the evils of ignorance. He desired to induce every rich man to despoil himself of superfluity, and to create a brotherhood of property and service, and was ready to be the first to lay down the advantages of his birth. He was of too uncompromising a disposition to join any party. He did not in his youth look forward to gradual improvement: nay, in those days of intolerance, now almost forgotten, it seemed as easy to look forward to the sort of millennium of freedom and brotherhood which he thought the proper state of mankind as to the present reign of moderation and improvement. Ill-health made him believe that his race would soon be run; that a year or two was all he had of life. He desired that these years should be useful and illustrious. He saw, in a fervent call on his fellow-creatures to share alike the blessings of the creation, to love and serve each other, the noblest work that life and time permitted him. In this spirit he composed *Queen Mab*.

He was a lover of the wonderful and wild in literature, but had not fostered these tastes at their genuine sources—the romances and chivalry of the middle ages—but in the perusal of such German works as were current in those days. Under the influence of these he, at the age of fifteen, wrote two short prose romances of slender merit. The

sentiments and language were exaggerated, the composition imitative and poor. He wrote also a poem on the subject of Ahasuerus—being led to it by a German fragment he picked up, dirty and torn, in Lincoln's Inn Fields. This fell afterwards into other hands, and was considerably altered before it was printed. Our earlier English poetry was almost unknown to him. The love and knowledge of Nature developed by Wordsworth—the lofty melody and mysterious beauty of Coleridge's poetry—and the wild fantastic machinery and gorgeous scenery adopted by Southey—composed his favourite reading; the rhythm of *Queen Mab* was founded on that of *Thalaba*, and the first few lines bear a striking resemblance in spirit, though not in idea, to the opening of that poem. His fertile imagination, and ear tuned to the finest sense of harmony, preserved him from imitation. Another of his favourite books was the poem of *Gebir* by Walter Savage Landor. From his boyhood he had a wonderful facility of versification, which he carried into another language; and his Latin school-verses were composed with an ease and correctness that procured for him prizes, and caused him to be resorted to by all his friends for help. He was, at the period of writing *Queen Mab*, a great traveller within the limits of England, Scotland, and Ireland. His time was spent among the loveliest scenes of these countries. Mountain and lake and forest were his home; the phenomena of Nature were his favourite study. He loved to inquire into their causes, and was addicted to pursuits of natural philosophy and chemistry, as far as they could be carried on as an amusement. These tastes gave truth and vivacity to his descriptions, and warmed his soul with that deep admiration for the wonders of Nature which constant association with her inspired.

He never intended to publish *Queen*

Mab as it stands ; but a few years after, when printing *Alastor*, he extracted a small portion which he entitled *The Dacmon of the World*. In this he changed somewhat the versification, and made other alterations scarcely to be called improvements.

Some years after, when in Italy, a bookseller published an edition of *Queen Mab* as it originally stood. Shelley was hastily written to by his friends, under the idea that, deeply injurious as the mere distribution of the poem had proved, the publication might awaken fresh persecutions. At the suggestion of these friends he wrote a letter on the subject, printed in the *Examiner* newspaper—with which I close this history of his earliest work.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE 'EXAMINER.'

'SIR,

'Having heard that a poem entitled *Queen Mab* has been surreptitiously published in London, and that legal proceedings have been instituted against the publisher, I request the favour of your insertion of the following explanation of the affair, as it relates to me.

'A poem entitled *Queen Mab* was written by me at the age of eighteen, I daresay in a sufficiently intemperate spirit—but even then was not intended for publication, and a few copies only were struck off, to be distributed among my personal friends. I have not seen this production for several years. I

doubt not but that it is perfectly worthless in point of literary composition; and that, in all that concerns moral and political speculation, as well as in the subtler discriminations of metaphysical and religious doctrine, it is still more crude and immature. I am a devoted enemy to religious, political, and domestic oppression; and I regret this publication, not so much from literary vanity, as because I fear it is better fitted to injure than to serve the sacred cause of freedom. I have directed my solicitor to apply to Chancery for an injunction to restrain the sale; but, after the precedent of Mr. Southey's *Wat Tyler* (a poem written, I believe, at the same age, and with the same unreflecting enthusiasm), with little hope of success.

'Whilst I exonerate myself from all share in having divulged opinions hostile to existing sanctions, under the form, whatever it may be, which they assume in this poem, it is scarcely necessary for me to protest against the system of inculcating the truth of Christianity or the excellence of Monarchy, however true or however excellent they may be, by such equivocal arguments as confiscation and imprisonment, and invective and slander, and the insolent violation of the most sacred ties of Nature and society.

'SIR,

'I am your obliged and obedient servant,

'PERCY B. SHELLEY.

'Pisa, June 22, 1821.'

[Of the following pieces the *Original Poetry* by Victor and Cazire, the Poems from *St. Irvyne*, or *The Rosicrucian*, *The Posthumous Fragments of Margaret Nicholson* and *The Devil's Walk*, were published by Shelley himself; the others by Medwin, Rossetti, Forman and Dowden, as indicated in the several prefatory notes.]

VERSES ON A CAT

[Published by Hogg, *Life of Shelley*, 1858; dated 1800.]

I

A CAT in distress,
Nothing more, nor less;
Good folks, I must faithfully tell ye,

As I am a sinner,
It waits for some dinner
To stuff out its own little belly.

II

You would not easily guess
All the modes of distress

Which torture the tenants of earth;
And the various evils, 10
Which like so many devils,
Attend the poor souls from their birth.

III
Some a living require,
And others desire
An old fellow out of the way; 15
And which is the best
I leave to be guessed,
For I cannot pretend to say.

IV
One wants society,
Another variety, 20
Others a tranquil life;
Some want food,
Others, as good,
Only want a wife.

V
But this poor little cat 25
Only wanted a rat,
To stuff out its own little maw;
And it were as good
Some people had such food,
To make them *hold their jaw!* 30

FRAGMENT: OMENS

[Published by Medwin, *Shelley Papers*,
1833; dated 1807.]

HARK! the owlet flaps his wings
In the pathless dell beneath;
Hark! 'tis the night-raven sings
Tidings of approaching death.

EPITAPHIUM

[LATIN VERSION OF THE EPITAPH IN
GRAY'S ELEGY.]

[Published by Medwin, *Life of Shelley*,
1847; dated 1808-9.]

I
Hic sinu fessum caput hospitali
Cespitis dormit juvenis, nec illi
Fata ridebant, popularis ille
Nescius auræ.

II
Musa non vultu genus arroganti 5
Rustica natum grege despicata,
Et suum tristic puerum notavit
Sollicitudo.

III
Indoles illi bene larga, pectus
Veritas sedem sibi vindicavit, 10
Et pari tantis meritis beavit
Munere coelum.

IV
Omne quod moestis habuit miserto
Corde largivit lacrimam, recepit
Omne quod coelo voluit, fidelis 15
Pectus amici.

V
Longius sed tu fuge curiosus
Caeteras laudes fuge suspicari,
Caeteras culpas fuge velle tractas
Sede tremenda. 20

VI
Spe tremescentes recubant in illa
Sede virtutes pariterque culpae,
In sui Patris gremio, tremenda
Sede Deique.

IN HOROLOGIUM

[Published by Medwin, *Life of Shelley*,
1847; dated 1809.]

INTER marmoreas Leonoræ pendula
colles
Fortunata nimis Machina dicit horas.
Quas *manibus* premit illa duas insensa
papillas
Cur mihi sit *digito* tangere, amata,
nefas?

A DIALOGUE

[Published (without title) by Hogg,
Life of Shelley, 1858; dated 1809. Included
in the Esdaile MS. Book.]

Death.

For my dagger is bathed in the blood
of the brave,
I come, care-worn tenant of life, from
the grave,

Where Innocence sleeps 'neath the
peace-giving sod,
And the good cease to tremble at
Tyranny's nod;

I offer a calm habitation to thee,— 5
Say, victim of grief, wilt thou slumber
with me?

My mansion is damp, cold silence is
there,
But it lulls in oblivion the fiends of
despair;

Not a groan of regret, not a sigh, not a
breath,
Dares dispute with grim Silence the
empire of Death. 10

I offer a calm habitation to thee,—
Say, victim of grief, wilt thou slumber
with me?

Mortal.

Mine eyelids are heavy; my soul seeks
repose,

It longs in thy cells to embosom its
woes,

It longs in thy cells to deposit its
load, 15

Where no longer the scorpions of Per-
fidy goad,—

Where the phantoms of Prejudice
vanish away,

And Bigotry's bloodhounds lose scent
of their prey.

Yet tell me, dark Death, when thine
empire is o'er,

What awaits on Futurity's mist-covered
shore? 20

Death.

Cease, cease, wayward Mortal! I dare
not unveil

The shadows that float o'er Eternity's
vale;

Nought waits for the good but a spirit
of Love,

That will hail their blest advent to
regions above.

For Love, Mortal, gleams through the
gloom of my sway, 25

And the shades which surround me fly
fast at its ray.

Hast thou loved?—Then depart from
these regions of hate,
And in slumber with me blunt the
arrows of fate.

I offer a calm habitation to thee,—
Say, victim of grief, wilt thou slumber
with me? 30

Mortal.

Oh! sweet is thy slumber! oh! sweet
is the ray

Which after thy night introduces the
day;

How concealed, how persuasive, self-
interest's breath,

Though it floats to mine ear from the
bosom of Death!

I hoped that I quite was forgotten by all,
Yet a lingering friend might be grieved
at my fall, 36

And duty forbids, though I languish to
die,

When departure might heave Virtue's
breast with a sigh.

O Death! O my friend! snatch this
form to thy shrine,

And I fear, dear destroyer, I shall not
repine. 40

TO THE MOONBEAM

[Published by Hogg, *Life of Shelley*,
1858; dated 1809. Included in the Esdaile
MS. Book.]

I

MOONBEAM, leave the shadowy vale,
To bathe this burning brow.

Moonbeam, why art thou so pale,
As thou walkest o'er the dewy dale,

Where humble wild-flowers grow?
Is it to mimic me? 6

But that can never be;

For thine orb is bright,

And the clouds are light,

That at intervals shadow the star-
studded night. 10

II

Now all is deathly still on earth;
Nature's tired frame reposes;

And, ere the golden morning's birth
 Its radiant hues discloses,
 Flies forth its balmy breath.
 But mine is the midnight of
 Death, 16

And Nature's morn
 To my bosom forlorn
 Brings but a gloomier night, implants
 a deadlier thorn.

III

Wretch! Suppress the glare of mad-
 ness 20

Struggling in thine haggard eye,
 For the keenest throb of sadness,
 Pale Despair's most sickening sigh,
 Is but to mimic me;
 And this must ever be, 25
 When the twilight of care,
 And the night of despair,

Seem in my breast but joys to the pangs
 that rangle there.

THE SOLITARY

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W.*
of P. B. S., 1870; dated 1810. Included in
 the Esdaile MS. Book.]

I

DAR'ST thou amid the varied multitude
 To live alone, an isolated thing?
 To see the busy beings round thee
 spring,
 And care for none; in thy calm solitude,
 A flower that scarce breathes in the
 desert rude 5
 To Zephyr's passing wing?

II

Not the swart Pariah in some Indian
 grove,
 Lone, lean, and hunted by his
 brother's hate,
 Hath drunk so deep the cup of bitter
 fate
 As that poor wretch who cannot,
 cannot love: 10
 He bears a load which nothing can
 remove,
 A killing, withering weight.

III

He smiles — 'tis sorrow's deadliest
 mockery;

He speaks—the cold words flow not
 from his soul;

He acts like others, drains the genial
 bowl,— 15

Yet, yet he longs—although he fears—
 to die;

He pants to reach what yet he seems to
 fly,

Dull life's extremest goal.

TO DEATH

[Published (without title) by Hogg,
Life of Shelley, 1858; dated 1810. Included
 (under the title, *To Death*) in the Esdaile
 MS. Book.]

DEATH! where is thy victory?

To triumph whilst I die,

To triumph whilst thine ebon wing
 Enfolds my shuddering soul?

O Death! where is thy sting? 5

Not when the tides of murder roll,
 When nations groan, that kings may
 bask in bliss,

Death! canst thou boast a victory such
 as this—

When in his hour of pomp and
 power

His blow the mightiest murderer
 gave, 10

Mid Nature's cries the sacrifice

Of millions to glut the grave;

When sunk the Tyrant Desolation's
 slave;

Or Freedom's life-blood streamed upon
 thy shrine;

Stern Tyrant, couldst thou boast a
 victory such as mine? 15

To know in dissolution's void

That mortals' baubles sunk decay;

That everything, but Love, destroyed

Must perish with its kindred clay,—

Perish Ambition's crown, 20

Perish her sceptred sway;

To the Moonbeam.—28 rangle Esdaile MS.; wake 1858.

To Death.—10 murderer Esdaile MS.; murders 1858.

From Death's pale front fades Pride's
fastidious frown.

In Death's damp vault the lurid fires
decay,

That Envy lights at heaven-born
Virtue's beam—

That all the cares subside, 25

Which lurk beneath the tide

Of life's unquiet stream;—

Yes! this is victory!

And on yon rock, whose dark form
glooms the sky,

To stretch these pale limbs, when the
soul is fled; 30

To baffle the lean passions of their
prey,

To sleep within the palace of the dead!

Oh! not the King, around whose
dazzling throne

His countless courtiers mock the
words they say,

Triumphs amid the bud of glory blown,
As I in this cold bed, and faint expiring

groan! 36

Tremble, ye proud, whose grandeur
mocks the woe

Which props the column of unnatural
state!

You the plainings, faint and low,
From Misery's tortured soul that

flow, 40

Shall usher to your fate.

Tremble, ye conquerors, at whose fell
command

The war-fiend riots o'er a peaceful land!

You Desolation's gory throng

Shall bear from Victory along 45

To that mysterious strand.

.

LOVE'S ROSE

[Published (without title) by Hogg,
Life of Shelley, 1858; dated 1810. Included
in the Esdaile MS. Book.]

I

HOPES, that swell in youthful breasts,

Live not through the waste of time!

Love's rose a host of thorns invests;

Love's Rose.—The title is Rossetti's, 1870.

Cold, ungenial is the clime,

Where its honours blow. 5

Youth says, 'The purple flowers are
mine,'

Which die the while they glow.

II

Dear the boon to Fancy given,

Retracted whilst it's granted:

Sweet the rose which lives in Heaven,

Although on earth 'tis planted, 11

Where its honours blow,

While by earth's slaves the leaves are
riven

Which die the while they glow.

III

Age cannot Love destroy, 15

But perfidy can blast the flower,

Even when in most unwary hour

It blooms in Fancy's bower.

Age cannot Love destroy,

But perfidy can rend the shrine 20

In which its vermeil splendours shine.

EYES: A FRAGMENT

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W.*
of P. B. S., 1870; dated 1810. Included
(four unpublished eight-line stanzas) in
the Esdaile MS. Book.]

How eloquent are eyes!

Not the rapt poet's frenzied lay

When the soul's wildest feelings stray

Can speak so well as they.

How eloquent are eyes! 5

Not music's most impassioned note

On which Love's warmest fervours float

Like them bids rapture rise.

Love, look thus again,—

That your look may light a waste of
years, 10

Darting the beam that conquers cares

Through the cold shower of tears.

Love, look thus again!

.

2 not through Esdaile MS.; they this, 1858.

ORIGINAL POETRY
BY VICTOR AND CAZIRE

[Published by Shelley, 1810. A Reprint, edited by Richard Garnett, C.B., LL.D., was issued by John Lane, in 1898. The punctuation of the original edition is here retained.]

A Person complained that whenever he began to write, he never could arrange his ideas in grammatical order. Which occasion suggested the idea of the following lines:

I

HERE I sit with my paper, my pen and
my ink,
First of this thing, and that thing, and
t'other thing think;
Then my thoughts come so pell-mell all
into my mind,
That the sense or the subject I never
can find:
This word is wrong placed,—no regard
to the sense, 5
The present and future, instead of past
tense,
Then my grammar I want; O dear!
what a bore,
I think I shall never attempt to write
more,
With patience I then my thoughts must
arraign,
Have them all in due order like mutes
in a train, 10
Like them too must wait in due
patience and thought,
Or else my fine works will all come to
nought.
My wit too's so copious, it flows like
a river,
But disperses its waters on black and
white never;
Like smoke it appears independent and
free, 15
But ah luckless smoke! it all passes
like thee—
Then at length all my patience entirely
lost,
My paper and pens in the fire are tossed;
But come, try again—you must never
despair,
Our Murray's or Entick's are not all so
rare, 20
Implore their assistance—they'll come
to your aid,

Perform all your business without being
paid,
They'll tell you the present tense,
future and past,
Which should come first, and which
should come last,
This Murray will do—then to Entick
repair, 25
To find out the meaning of any word rare.
This they friendly will tell, and ne'er
make you blush,
With a jeering look, taunt, or an O fie!
tush!
Then straight all your thoughts in
black and white put,
Not minding the if's, the be's, and the
but, 30
Then read it all over, see how it will
run,
How answers the wit, the retort, and
the pun,
Your writings may then with old
Socrates vie,
May on the same shelf with Demos-
thenes lie,
May as Junius be sharp, or as Plato be
sage, 35
The pattern or satire to all of the age;
But stop—a mad author I mean not to
turn,
Nor with thirst of applause does my
heated brain burn,
Sufficient that sense, wit, and grammar
combined,
My letters may make some slight food
for the mind; 40
That my thoughts to my friends I may
freely impart,
In all the warm language that flows
from the heart,
Hark! futurity calls! it loudly com-
plains,

It bids me step forward and just hold
the reins,
My excuse shall be humble, and faithful, and true, 45
Such as I fear can be made but by few—

Of writers this age has abundance and plenty,

Three score and a thousand, two millions and twenty,

Three score of them wits who all sharply vie,

To try what odd creature they best can belie, 50

A thousand are prudes who for *Charity* write,

And fill up their sheets with spleen, envy, and spite[,]

One million are bards, who to Heaven aspire,

And stuff their works full of bombast, rant, and fire,

T'other million are wags who in Grub-street attend, 55

And just like a cobbler the old writings mend,

The twenty are those who for pulpits indite,

And pore over sermons all Saturday night.

And now my good friends—who come after I mean,

As I ne'er wore a cassock, or dined with a dean, 60

Or like cobblers at mending I never did try,

Nor with poets in lyrics attempted to vie;

As for prudes these good souls I both hate and detest,

So here I believe the matter must rest.—

I've heard your complaint—my answer I've made, 65

And since to your calls all the tribute I've paid,

Adieu my good friend; pray never despair,

But grammar and sense and every-thing dare,

Attempt but to write dashing, easy, and free,

Then take out your grammar and pay him his fee, 70

Be not a coward, shrink not to a tense,

But read it all over and make it out sense.

What a tiresome girl!—pray soon make an end,

Else my limited patience you'll quickly expend.

Well adieu, I no longer your patience will try— 75

So swift to the post now the letter shall fly.

JANUARY, 1810.

II

TO MISS ——— [HARRIET GROVE]
FROM MISS ——— [ELIZABETH

SHELLEY]

FOR your letter, dear ——— [Hattie],
accept my best thanks,

Rendered long and amusing by virtue of franks,

Though concise they would please, yet the longer the better,

The more news that's crammed in, more amusing the letter,

All excuses of etiquette nonsense I hate, 5

Which only are fit for the tardy and late,

As when converse grows flat, of the weather they talk,

How fair the sun shines—a fine day for a walk,

Then to politics turn, of Burdett's reformation,

One declares it would hurt, t'other better the nation, 10

Will ministers keep? sure they've acted quite wrong,

The burden this is of each morning-call song.

So ——— is going to ——— you say,
I hope that success her great efforts

will pay [——]

That [the Colonel] will see her, be
dazzled outright, 15
And declare he can't bear to be out of
her sight.
Write flaming epistles with love's
pointed dart,
Whose sharp little arrow struck right
on his heart,
Scold poor innocent Cupid for mis-
chievous ways,
He knows not how much to laud forth
her praise, 20
That he neither eats, drinks or sleeps
for her sake,
And hopes her hard heart some com-
passion will take,
A refusal would kill him, so desperate
his flame,
But he fears, for he knows she is not
common game,
Then praises her sense, wit, discern-
ment and grace, 25
He's not one that's caught by a sly
looking face,
Yet that's *too* divine—such a black
sparkling eye,
At the bare glance of which near a
thousand will die;
Thus runs he on meaning but one word
in ten,
More than is meant by most such kind
of men, 30
For they're all alike, take them one
with another,
Begging pardon—with the exception
of my brother.
Of the drawings you mention much
praise I have heard,
Most opinion's the same, with the
difference of word,
Some get a good name by the voice of
the crowd, 35
Whilst to poor humble merit small
praise is allowed,
As in parliament votes, so in pictures
a name,
Oft determines a fate at the altar of
fame.—

So on Friday this City's gay vortex you
quit,
And no longer with Doctors and Johnny
cats sit— 40
Now your parcel's arrived —
[Bysshe's] letter shall go,
I hope all your joy mayn't be turned
into woe,
Experience will tell you that pleasure
is vain,
When it promises sunshine how often
comes rain.
So when to fond hope every blessing is
nigh, 45
How oft when we smile it is checked
with a sigh,
When Hope, gay deceiver, in pleasure
is dressed,
How oft comes a stroke that may rob
us of rest.
When we think ourselves safe, and the
goal near at hand,
Like a vessel just landing, we're
wrecked near the strand, 50
And though memory forever the sharp
pang must feel,
'Tis our duty to bear, and our hardship
to steel—
May misfortunes dear Girl, ne'er thy
happiness cloy,
May thy days glide in peace, love,
comfort and joy,
May thy tears with soft pity for other
woes flow, 55
Woes, which thy tender heart never
may know,
For hardships our own, God has taught
us to bear,
Though sympathy's soul to a friend
drops a tear.
Oh dear! what sentimental stuff have
I written,
Only fit to tear up and play with a
kitten. 60
What sober reflections in the midst of
this letter!
Jocularity sure would have suited
much better;

But there are exceptions to all common
rules,
For this is a truth by all boys learned
at schools.
Now adieu my dear —— [Hattie] I'm
sure I must tire, 65
For if I do, you may throw it into the
fire,
So accept the best love of your cousin
and friend,
Which brings this nonsensical rhyme
to an end.

APRIL 30, 1810.

III. SONG

COLD, cold is the blast when December
is howling,
Cold are the damps on a dying man's
brow,—
Stern are the seas when the wild waves
are rolling,
And sad is the grave where a loved
one lies low;
But colder is scorn from the being who
loved thee, 5
More stern is the sneer from the friend
who has proved thee,
More sad are the tears when their
sorrows have moved thee,
Which mixed with groans anguish
and wild madness flow—

And ah! poor —— has felt all this
horror,
Full long the fallen victim con-
tended with fate: 10
'Till a destitute outcast abandoned to
sorrow,
She sought her babe's food at her
ruiner's gate—
Another had charmed the remorseless
betrayer,
He turned laughing aside from her
moans and her prayer,
She said nothing, but wringing the
wet from her hair, 15
Crossed the dark mountain side, though
the hour it was late.

'Twas on the wild height of the dark
Penmanmawr,
That the form of the wasted ——
reclined;
She shrieked to the ravens that croaked
from afar,
And she sighed to the gusts of the
wild sweeping wind.— 20
'I call not yon rocks where the thunder
peals rattle,
I call not yon clouds where the ele-
ments battle,
But thee, cruel —— I call thee un-
kind!'—

Then she wreathed in her hair the wild
flowers of the mountain,
And deliriously laughing, a garland
entwined, 25
She bedewed it with tears, then she
hung o'er the fountain,
And leaving it, cast it a prey to the
wind.
'Ah! go,' she exclaimed, 'when the
tempest is yelling,
'Tis unkind to be cast on the sea that
is swelling,
But I left, a pitiless outcast, my
dwelling, 30
My garments are torn, so they say is
my mind—'

Not long lived ——, but over her
grave
Waved the desolate form of a storm-
blasted yew,
Around it no demons or ghosts dare to
rave,
But spirits of peace steep her slum-
bers in dew. 35
Then stay thy swift steps mid the dark
mountain heather,
Though chill blow the wind and severe
is the weather,
For perfidy, traveller! cannot bereave
her,
Of the tears, to the tombs of the
innocent due.—

JULY, 1810.

IV. SONG

COME [Harriet]! sweet is the hour,
Soft Zephyrs breathe gently around,
The anemone's night-boding flower,
Has sunk its pale head on the ground.

'Tis thus the world's keenness hath
torn, 5
Some mild heart that expands to its
blast,
'Tis thus that the wretched forlorn,
Sinks poor and neglected at last.—

The world with its keenness and woe,
Has no charms or attraction for me, 10
Its unkindness with grief has laid low,
The heart which is faithful to thee.

The high trees that wave past the
moon,
As I walk in their umbrage with you,
All declare I must part with you soon,
All bid you a tender adieu!— 16

Then [Harriet]! dearest farewell,
You and I love, may ne'er meet
again;

These woods and these meadows can tell
How soft and how sweet was the
strain.— 20

APRIL, 1810.

V. SONG

DESPAIR

Ask not the pallid stranger's woe,
With beating heart and throbbing
breast,

Whose step is faltering, weak, and slow,
As though the body needed rest.—

Whose 'wilder'd eye no object meets, 5
Nor cares to ken a friendly glance,
With silent grief his bosom beats,—
Now fixed, as in a deathlike trance.

Who looks around with fearful eye,
And shuns all converse with man-
kind, 10

As though some one his griefs might spy,
And soothe them with a kindred mind.

A friend or foe to him the same,
He looks on each with equal eye;

The difference lies but in the name, 15
To none for comfort can he fly.—

'Twas deep despair, and sorrow's trace,
To him too keenly given,
Whose memory, time could not efface—
His peace was lodged in Heaven.— 20

He looks on all this world bestows,
The pride and pomp of power,
As trifles best for pageant shows
Which vanish in an hour.

When torn is dear affection's tie, 25
Sinks the soft heart full low;
It leaves without a parting sigh,
All that these realms bestow.

JUNE, 1810.

VI. SONG

SORROW

To me this world's a dreary blank,
All hopes in life are gone and fled,
My high strung energies are sank,
And all my blissful hopes lie dead.—

The world once smiling to my view, 5
Showed scenes of endless bliss and
joy;

The world I then but little knew,
Ah! little knew how pleasures cloy;

All then was jocund, all was gay,
No thought beyond the present hour,
I danced in pleasure's fading ray, 11
Fading alas! as drooping flower.

Nor do the heedless in the throng,
One thought beyond the morrow
give[,]

They court the feast, the dance, the
song, 15
Nor think how short their time to
live.

The heart that bears deep sorrow's
trace,

What earthly comfort can console,
It drags a dull and lengthened pace,
'Till friendly death its woes enroll.—

The sunken cheek, the humid eyes, 21
E'en better than the tongue can tell;

In whose sad breast deep sorrow lies,
Where memory's rankling traces
dwell.—

The rising tear, the stifled sigh, 25
A mind but ill at ease display,
Like blackening clouds in stormy sky,
Where fiercely vivid lightnings play.

Thus when souls' energy is dead,
When sorrow dims each earthly
view, 30

When every fairy hope is fled,
We bid ungrateful world adieu.
AUGUST, 1810.

VII. SONG

HOPE

AND said I that all hope was fled,
That sorrow and despair were mine,
That each enthusiast wish was dead,
Had sank beneath pale Misery's
shrine.—

Seest thou the sunbeam's yellow glow,
That robes with liquid streams of
light; 6

Yon distant Mountain's craggy brow.
And shows the rocks so fair,—so
bright —

'Tis thus sweet expectation's ray,
In softer view shows distant hours, 10
And portrays each succeeding day,
As dressed in fairer, brighter
flowers,—

The vermeil tinted flowers that blossom;
Are frozen but to bud anew, 14
Then sweet deceiver calm my bosom,
Although thy visions be not true,—

Yet true they are,—and I'll believe,
Thy whisperings soft of love and
peace,
God never made thee to deceive, 19
'Tis sin that bade thy empire cease.

Yet though despair my life should gloom,
Though horror should around me
close,

With those I love, beyond the tomb,
Hope shows a balm for all my woes.
AUGUST, 1810.

VIII. SONG

TRANSLATED FROM THE ITALIAN

OH! what is the gain of restless care,
And what is ambitious treasure?
And what are the joys that the modish
share,

In their sickly haunts of pleasure?

My husband's repast with delight I
spread, 5

What though 'tis but rustic fare,
May each guardian angel protect his
shed,

May contentment and quiet be there.

And may I support my husband's years,
May I soothe his dying pain, 10
And then may I dry my fast falling
tears,

And meet him in Heaven again.

JULY, 1810.

IX. SONG

TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN

AH! grasp the dire dagger and couch
the fell spear,

If vengeance and death to thy bosom
be dear,

The dastard shall perish, death's tor-
ment shall prove,

For fate and revenge are decreed from
above.

Ah! where is the hero, whose nerves
strung by youth, 5

Will defend the firm cause of justice
and truth;

With insatiate desire whose bosom shall
swell,

To give up the oppressor to judgement
and Hell—

For him shall the fair one twine chap-
lets of bays,

To him shall each warrior give merited
praise, 10

And triumphant returned from the
 clangour of arms,
 He shall find his reward in his loved
 maiden's charms.
 In ecstatic confusion the warrior shall
 sip,
 The kisses that glow on his love's dewy
 lip,
 And mutual, eternal, embraces shall
 prove, 15
 The rewards of the brave are the trans-
 ports of love.

OCTOBER, 1809.

X

THE IRISHMAN'S SONG

THE stars may dissolve, and the foun-
 tain of light
 May sink into ne'er ending chaos and
 night,
 Our mansions must fall, and earth
 vanish away,
 But thy courage O Erin! may never
 decay.
 See! the wide wasting ruin extends all
 around, 5
 Our ancestors' dwellings lie sunk on the
 ground,
 Our foes ride in triumph throughout
 our domains,
 And our mightiest heroes lie stretched
 on the plains.
 Ah! dead is the harp which was wont
 to give pleasure,
 Ah! sunk is our sweet country's rap-
 turous measure, 10
 But the war note is waked, and the
 clangour of spears,
 The dread yell of Sloghan yet sounds in
 our ears.
 Ah! where are the heroes! triumphant
 in death,
 Convulsed they recline on the blood
 sprinkled heath,
 Or the yelling ghosts ride on the blast
 that sweeps by, 15
 And 'my countrymen! vengeance!'
 incessantly cry.

OCTOBER, 1809.

XI. SONG

FIERCE roars the midnight storm
 O'er the wild mountain,
 Dark clouds the night deform,
 Swift rolls the fountain—
 See! o'er yon rocky height, 5
 Dim mists are flying—
 See by the moon's pale light,
 Poor Laura's dying!
 Shame and remorse shall howl,
 By her false pillow— 10
 Fiercer than storms that roll,
 O'er the white billow;
 No hand her eyes to close,
 When life is flying,
 But she will find repose, 15
 For Laura's dying!
 Then will I seek my love,
 Then will I cheer her,
 Then my esteem will prove,
 When no friend is near her, 20
 On her grave I will lie,
 When life is parted,
 On her grave I will die,
 For the false hearted.

DECEMBER, 1809.

XII. SONG

To — [HARRIET]

AH! sweet is the moonbeam that sleeps
 on yon fountain,
 And sweet the mild rush of the soft-
 sighing breeze,
 And sweet is the glimpse of yon dimly-
 seen mountain,
 'Neath the verdant arcades of yon
 shadowy trees.
 But sweeter than all was thy tone of
 affection, 5
 Which scarce seemed to break on the
 stillness of eve,
 Though the time it is past!—yet the
 dear recollection,
 For aye in the heart of thy [Percy]
 must live.
 Yet he hears thy dear voice in the
 summer winds sighing,

Mild accents of happiness lisp in his
 ear, 10
 When the hope-wingèd moments
 athwart him are flying,
 And he thinks of the friend to his
 bosom so dear.—
 And thou dearest friend in his bosom
 for ever
 Must reign unalloyed by the fast
 rolling year,
 He loves thee, and dearest one never,
 Oh! never 15
 Canst thou cease to be loved by a
 heart so sincere.

AUGUST, 1810.

XIII. SONG

To — [HARRIET]

STERN, stern is the voice of fate's fear-
 ful command,
 When accents of horror it breathes
 in our ear,
 Or compels us for aye bid adieu to the
 land,
 Where exists that loved friend to our
 bosom so dear,
 'Tis sterner than death o'er the shudder-
 ing wretch bending, 5
 And in skeleton grasp his fell sceptre
 extending,
 Like the heart-stricken deer to that
 loved covert wending,
 Which never again to his eyes may
 appear—
 And ah! he may envy the heart-
 stricken quarry,
 Who bids to the friend of affection
 farewell, 10
 He may envy the bosom so bleeding
 and gory,
 He may envy the sound of the drear
 passing knell,
 Not so deep is his grief on his death
 couch reposing,
 When on the last vision his dim eyes
 are closing!

As the outcast whose love-raptured
 senses are losing, 15
 The last tones of thy voice on the
 wild breeze that swell!
 Those tones were so soft, and so sad,
 that ah! never,
 Can the sound cease to vibrate on
 Memory's ear,
 In the stern wreck of Nature for ever
 and ever,
 The remembrance must live of a
 friend so sincere. 20

AUGUST, 1810.

XIV

SAINT EDMOND'S EVE

Oh! did you observe the Black Canon
 pass,
 And did you observe his frown?
 He goeth to say the midnight mass,
 In holy St. Edmond's town.
 He goeth to sing the burial chaunt, 5
 And to lay the wandering sprite,
 Whose shadowy, restless form doth
 haunt,
 The Abbey's drear aisle this night.
 It saith it will not its wailing cease,
 'Till that holy man come near, 10
 'Till he pour o'er its grave the prayer
 of peace,
 And sprinkle the hallowed tear.
 The Canon's horse is stout and strong
 The road is plain and fair,
 But the Canon slowly wends along, 15
 And his brow is gloomed with care.
 Who is it thus late at the Abbey-gate?
 Sullen echoes the portal bell,
 It sounds like the whispering voice of
 fate,
 It sounds like a funeral knell. 20
 The Canon his faltering knee thrice
 bowed,
 And his frame was convulsed with
 fear,
 When a voice was heard distinct and
 loud,
 'Prepare! for thy hour is near.'

He crosses his breast, he mutters a
 prayer, 25
 To Heaven he lifts his eye,
 He heeds not the Abbot's gazing stare,
 Nor the dark Monks who murmured
 by.
 Bare-headed he worships the sculp-
 tured saints
 That frown on the sacred walls, 30
 His face it grows pale,—he trembles,
 he faints,
 At the Abbot's feet he falls.
 And straight the father's robe he kissed,
 Who cried, 'Grace dwells with thee,
 The spirit will fade like the morning
 mist, 35
 At your benedicite.
 'Now haste within! the board is spread,
 Keen blows the air, and cold, 38
 The spectre sleeps in its earthy bed,
 'Till St. Edmond's bell hath tolled,—
 'Yet rest your wearied limbs to-night,
 You've journeyed many a mile,
 To-morrow lay the wailing sprite,
 That shrieks in the moonlight aisle.
 'Oh! faint are my limbs and my bosom
 is cold, 45
 Yet to-night must the sprite be laid,
 Yet to-night when the hour of horror's
 told,
 Must I meet the wandering shade.
 'Nor food, nor rest may now delay,—
 For hark! the echoing pile, 50
 A bell loud shakes!—Oh haste away,
 O lead to the haunted aisle.'
 The torches slowly move before,
 The cross is raised on high,
 A smile of peace the Canon wore, 55
 But horror dimmed his eye—
 And now they climb the footworn stair,
 The chapel gates unclose,
 Now each breathed low a fervent
 prayer,
 And fear each bosom froze— 60
 Now paused awhile the doubtful band
 And viewed the solemn scene,—

Full dark the clustered columns stand,
 The moon gleams pale between—
 'Say father, say, what cloisters' gloom
 Conceals the unquiet shade, 66
 Within what dark unhallowed tomb,
 The corse unblessed was laid.'
 'Through yonder drear aisle alone it
 walks,
 And murmurs a mournful plaint, 70
 Of thee! Black Canon, it wildly talks,
 And call on thy patron saint—
 The pilgrim this night with wondering
 eyes,
 As he prayed at St. Edmond's
 shrine,
 From a black marble tomb hath seen
 it rise, 75
 And under yon arch recline.'—
 'Oh! say upon that black marble tomb,
 What memorial sad appears.'—
 'Undistinguished it lies in the chancel's
 gloom,
 No memorial sad it bears'— 80
 The Canon his paternoster reads,
 His rosary hung by his side,
 Now swift to the chancel doors he leads,
 And untouched they open wide,
 Resistless, strange sounds his steps
 impel, 85
 To approach to the black marble
 tomb,
 'Oh! enter, Black Canon,' a whisper
 fell,
 'Oh! enter, thy hour is come.'
 He paused, told his beads, and the
 threshold passed,
 Oh! horror, the chancel doors close,
 A loud yell was borne on the rising
 blast, 91
 And a deep, dying groan arose.
 The Monks in amazement shuddering
 stand,
 They burst through the chancel's
 gloom,
 From St. Edmond's shrine, lo! a
 skeleton's hand, 95
 Points to the black marble tomb.

Lo! deeply engraved, an inscription
 blood red,
 In characters fresh and clear—
 'The guilty Black Canon of Elmham's
 dead,
 And his wife lies buried here!' 100
 In Elmham's tower he wedded a Nun,
 To St. Edmond's his bride he bore,
 On this eve her noviciate here was
 begun,
 And a Monk's gray weeds she wore;—
 O! deep was her conscience dyed with
 guilt, 105
 Remorse she full oft revealed,
 Her blood by the ruthless Black Canon
 was spilt,
 And in death her lips he sealed;
 Her spirit to penance this night was
 doomed,
 'Till the Canon atoned the deed, 110
 Here together they now shall rest en-
 tombed,
 'Till their bodies from dust are
 freed—
 Hark! a loud peal of thunder shakes
 the roof,
 Round the altar bright lightnings play,
 Speechless with horror the Monks stand
 aloof, 115
 And the storm dies sudden away—
 The inscription was gone! a cross on
 the ground,
 And a rosary shone through the
 gloom,
 But never again was the Canon there
 found,
 Or the Ghost on the black marble
 tomb. 120

XV. REVENGE

'Ah! quit me not yet, for the wind
 whistles shrill,
 Its blast wanders mournfully over the
 hill,
 The thunder's wild voice rattles madly
 above,
 You will not then, cannot then, leave
 me my love.—'

I must dearest Agnes, the night is far
 gone— 5
 I must wander this evening to Stras-
 burg alone,
 I must seek the drear tomb of my
 ancestors' bones,
 And must dig their remains from
 beneath the cold stones.
 'For the spirit of Conrad there meets
 me this night,
 And we quit not the tomb 'till dawn
 of the light, 10
 And Conrad's been dead just a month
 and a day!
 So farewell dearest Agnes for I must
 away,—
 'He bid me bring with me what most
 I held dear,
 Or a month from that time should
 I lie on my bier,
 And I'd sooner resign this false
 fluttering breath, 15
 Than my Agnes should dread either
 danger or death,
 'And I love you to madness my Agnes
 I love,
 My constant affection this night will
 I prove,
 This night will I go to the sepulchre's
 jaw,
 Alone will I glut its all conquering
 maw'— 20
 'No! no loved Adolphus thy Agnes will
 share,
 In the tomb all the dangers that wait
 for you there,
 I fear not the spirit,—I fear not the
 grave,
 My dearest Adolphus I'd perish to
 save'—
 'Nay seek not to say that thy love
 shall not go, 25
 But spare me those ages of horror and
 woe,
 For I swear to thee here that I'll perish
 ere day,
 If you go unattended by Agnes
 away'—

The night it was bleak the fierce storm
 raged around,
 The lightning's blue fire-light flashed
 on the ground, 30
 Strange forms seemed to flit,—and
 howl tidings of fate,
 As Agnes advanced to the sepulchre
 gate.—

The youth struck the portal,—the
 echoing sound
 Was fearfully rolled midst the tomb-
 stones around,
 The blue lightning gleamed o'er the
 dark chapel spire, 35
 And tinged were the storm clouds with
 sulphurous fire.

Still they gazed on the tombstone where
 Conrad reclined,
 Yet they shrank at the cold chilling
 blast of the wind,
 When a strange silver brilliance per-
 vaded the scene,
 And a figure advanced—tall in form—
 fierce in mien. 40

A mantle encircled his shadowy form,
 As light as a gossamer borne on the
 storm,
 Celestial terror sat throned in his gaze,
 Like the midnight pestiferous meteor's
 blaze.—

Spirit.

Thy father, Adolphus! was false, false
 as hell, 45
 And Conrad has cause to remember it
 well,
 He ruined my Mother, despised me his
 son,
 I quitted the world ere my vengeance
 was done.

I was nearly expiring—'twas close of
 the day,—
 A demon advanced to the bed where
 I lay, 50
 He gave me the power from whence
 I was hurled,
 To return to revenge, to return to the
 world,—

Now Adolphus I'll seize thy best loved
 in my arms,
 I'll drag her to Hades all blooming in
 charms,
 On the black whirlwind's thundering
 pinion I'll ride, 55
 And fierce yelling fiends shall exult o'er
 thy bride—

He spoke, and extending his ghastly
 arms wide,
 Majestic advanced with a swift noise-
 less stride,
 He clasped the fair Agnes—he raised
 her on high,
 And cleaving the roof sped his way to
 the sky— 60
 All was now silent,—and over the
 tomb,
 Thicker, deeper, was swiftly extended
 a gloom,
 Adolphus in horror sank down on the
 stone,
 And his fleeting soul fled with a harrow-
 ing groan.

DECEMBER, 1809.

XVI. GHASTA

OR, THE AVENGING DEMON!!!

The idea of the following tale was taken from a few unconnected German Stanzas.—The principal Character is evidently the Wandering Jew, and although not mentioned by name, the burning Cross on his forehead undoubtedly alludes to that superstition, so prevalent in the part of Germany called the Black Forest, where this scene is supposed to lie.

HARK! the owlet flaps her wing,
 In the pathless dell beneath,
 Hark! night ravens loudly sing,
 Tidings of despair and death.—

Horror covers all the sky, 5
 Clouds of darkness blot the moon,
 Prepare! for mortal thou must die,
 Prepare to yield thy soul up soon—

Fierce the tempest raves around,
 Fierce the volleyed lightnings fly, 10

Crashing thunder shakes the ground,
Fire and tumult fill the sky.—

Hark! the tolling village bell,
Tells the hour of midnight come,
Now can blast the powers of Hell, 15
Fiend-like goblins now can roam—

See! his crest all stained with rain,
A warrior hastening speeds his way,
He starts, looks round him, starts again,
And sighs for the approach of day. 20

See! his frantic steed he reins,
See! he lifts his hands on high,
Implores a respite to his pains,
From the powers of the sky.—

He seeks an Inn, for faint from toil, 25
Fatigue had bent his lofty form,
To rest his wearied limbs awhile,
Fatigued with wandering and the storm.

.
.

Slow the door is opened wide—
With trackless tread a stranger came,
His form Majestic, slow his stride, 31
He sate, nor spake,—nor told his name—

Terror blanched the warrior's cheek,
Cold sweat from his forehead ran,
In vain his tongue essayed to speak,—
At last the stranger thus began: 36

'Mortal! thou that saw'st the sprite,
Tell me what I wish to know,
Or come with me before 'tis light,
Where cypress trees and mandrakes 40
grow.

'Fierce the avenging Demon's ire,
Fiercer than the wintry blast,
Fiercer than the lightning's fire,
When the hour of twilight's past'—

The warrior raised his sunken eye, 45
It met the stranger's sullen scowl,
'Mortal! Mortal! thou must die,'
In burning letters chilled his soul.

Warrior.

Stranger! whoso'er you are,
I feel impelled my tale to tell— 50

Horrors stranger shalt thou hear,
Horrors drear as those of Hell.

O'er my Castle silence reigned,
Late the night and drear the hour,
When on the terrace I observed, 55
A fleeting shadowy mist to lower.—

Light the cloud as summer fog,
Which transient shuns the morning
beam;

Fleeting as the cloud on bog,
That hangs or on the mountain
stream.— 60

Horror seized my shuddering brain,
Horror dimmed my starting eye,
In vain I tried to speak,—In vain
My limbs essayed the spot to fly—

At last the thin and shadowy form, 65
With noiseless, trackless footsteps
came,—

Its light robe floated on the storm,
Its head was bound with lambent
flame.

In chilling voice drear as the breeze
Which sweeps along th' autumnal
ground, 70

Which wanders through the leafless
trees,
Or the mandrake's groan which floats
around.

'Thou art mine and I am thine,
'Till the sinking of the world,
I am thine and thou art mine, 75
'Till in ruin death is hurled —

'Strong the power and dire the fate,
Which drags me from the depths of
Hell,
Breaks the tomb's eternal gate,
Where fiendish shapes and dead men
yell, 80

'Haply I might ne'er have shrank
From flames that rack the guilty dead,
Haply I might ne'er have sank
On pleasure's flow'ry, thorny bed—

—'But stay! no more I dare disclose, 85
Of the tale I wish to tell,
On Earth relentless were my woes,
But fiercer are my pangs in Hell—

'Now I claim thee as my love,
Lay aside all chilling fear, 90
My affection will I prove,
Where sheeted ghosts and spectres
are!

'For thou art mine, and I am thine,
'Till the dreaded judgement day,
I am thine, and thou art mine— 95
Night is past—I must away.'

Still I gazed, and still the form
Pressed upon my aching sight,
Still I braved the howling storm,
When the ghost dissolved in night.—

Restless, sleepless fled the night, 101
Sleepless as a sick man's bed,
When he sighs for morning light,
When he turns his aching head,—

Slow and painful passed the day, 105
Melancholy seized my brain,
Lingering fled the hours away,
Lingering to a wretch in pain.—

At last came night, ah! horrid hour,
Ah! chilling time that wakes the
dead, 110

When demons ride the clouds that
lower,
—The phantom sat upon my bed.

In hollow voice, low as the sound
Which in some charnel makes its
moan, 114

What floats along the burying ground,
The phantom claimed me as her own.

Her chilling finger on my head,
With coldest touch congealed my
soul—

Cold as the finger of the dead,
Or damps which round a tombstone
roll— 120

Months are passed in lingering round,
Every night the spectre comes,
With thrilling step it shakes the
ground,
With thrilling step it round me
roams—

Stranger! I have told to thee, 125
All the tale I have to tell—

Stranger! canst thou tell to me,
How to 'scape the powers of Hell?—

Stranger.

Warrior! I can ease thy woes,
Wilt thou, wilt thou, come with me—
Warrior! I can all disclose, 131
Follow, follow, follow me.

Yet the tempest's duskiest wing,
Its mantle stretches o'er the sky,
Yet the midnight ravens sing, 135
'Mortal! Mortal! thou must die.'

At last they saw a river clear,
That crossed the heathy path they
trod,
The Stranger's look was wild and drear,
The firm Earth shook beneath his
nod— 140

He raised a wand above his head,
He traced a circle on the plain,
In a wild verse he called the dead,
The dead with silent footsteps came.

A burning brilliance on his head, 145
Flaming filled the stormy air,
In a wild verse he called the dead,
The dead in motley crowd were
there.—

'Ghast! Ghast! come along,
Bring thy fiendish crowd with thee,
Quickly raise th' avenging Song, 151
Ghast! Ghast! come to me.'

Horrid shapes in mantles gray,
Flit athwart the stormy night,
'Ghast! Ghast! come away, 155
Come away before 'tis light.'

See! the sheeted Ghost they bring,
Yelling dreadful o'er the heath,
Hark! the deadly verse they sing,
Tidings of despair and death! 160

The yelling Ghost before him stands,
See! she rolls her eyes around,
Now she lifts her bony hands,
Now her footsteps shake the ground.

Stranger.

Phantom of Theresa say, 165
Why to earth again you came,

Quickly speak, I must away!
Or you must bleach for aye in flame,—

Phantom.

Mighty one I know thee now,
Mightiest power of the sky, 170
Know thee by thy flaming brow,
Know thee by thy sparkling eye.

That fire is scorching! Oh! I came,
From the caverned depth of Hell,
My fleeting false Rodolph to claim, 175
Mighty one! I know thee well.—

Stranger.

Ghast! seize yon wandering sprite,
Drag her to the depth beneath,
Take her swift, before 'tis light,
Take her to the cells of death! 180

Thou that heardst the trackless dead,
In the mouldering tomb must lie,
Mortal! look upon my head,
Mortal! Mortal! thou must die.

Of glowing flame a cross was there, 185
Which threw a light around his
form,

Whilst his lank and raven hair,
Floated wild upon the storm.—

The warrior upwards turned his eyes,
Gazed upon the cross of fire, 190
There sat horror and surprise,
There sat God's eternal ire.—

A shivering through the Warrior flew,
Colder than the nightly blast,
Colder than the evening dew, 195
When the hour of twilight's past.—

Thunder shakes th' expansive sky,
Shakes the bosom of the heath,
'Mortal! Mortal! thou must die'— 199
The warrior sank convulsed in death.

JANUARY, 1810.

XVII. FRAGMENT,
OR THE TRIUMPH OF
CONSCIENCE

'Twas dead of the night when I sate in
my dwelling,
One glimmering lamp was expiring
and low,—
Around the dark tide of the tempest
was swelling,
Along the wild mountains night-ravens
were yelling,
They bodingly presaged destruction
and woe!

'Twas then that I started, the wild
storm was howling,
Nought was seen, save the lightning
that danced on the sky,
Above me the crash of the thunder was
rolling,
And low, chilling murmurs the blast
wafted by.—

My heart sank within me, unheeded
the jar 10
Of the battling clouds on the moun-
tain-tops broke,
Unheeded the thunder-peal crashed in
mine ear,
This heart hard as iron was stranger to
fear,

But conscience in low noiseless
whispering spoke.

'Twas then that her form on the whirl-
wind uprearing, 15

The dark ghost of the murdered
Victoria strode,

Her right hand a blood reeking dagger
was bearing,

She swiftly advanced to my lone-
some abode.—

I wildly then called on the tempest to
bear me!

: : : : : :

POEMS FROM ST. IRVYNE, OR, THE ROSICRUCIAN

[*St. Irvyne; or The Rosicrucian*, appeared early in 1811 (see *Bibliographical List*). Rossetti (1870) relying on a passage in Medwin's *Life of Shelley* (i. p. 74), assigns i, iii, v, and vi to 1808, and ii and iv to 1809. The titles of i, iii, iv, and v are Rossetti's; those of ii and vi are Dowden's.]

I.—VICTORIA

[Another version of *The Triumph of Conscience* immediately preceding.]

I

'Twas dead of the night, when I sat in
my dwelling;
One glimmering lamp was expiring
and low;
Around, the dark tide of the tempest
was swelling,
Along the wild mountains night-ravens
were yelling,—
They bodingly presaged destruction
and woe. 5

II

'Twas then that I started!—the wild
storm was howling,
Nought was seen, save the lightning,
which danced in the sky;
Above me, the crash of the thunder was
rolling,
And low, chilling murmurs, the blast
wafted by.

III

My heart sank within me—unheeded
the war 10
Of the battling clouds, on the
mountain-tops, broke;—
Unheeded the thunder-peal crashed in
mine ear—
This heart, hard as iron, is stranger to
fear;
But conscience in low, noiseless
whispering spoke.

IV

'Twas then that her form on the whirl-
wind upholding, 15
The ghost of the murdered Victoria
strode;

In her right hand, a shadowy shroud
she was holding,
She swiftly advanced to my lonesome
abode.

V

I wildly then called on the tempest to
bear me—
.

II.—'ON THE DARK HEIGHT OF
JURA'

I

GHOSTS of the dead! have I not heard
your yelling
Rise on the night-rolling breath of
the blast,
When o'er the dark aether the tempest
is swelling,
And on eddying whirlwind the
thunder-peal passed?

II

For oft have I stood on the dark
height of Jura, 5
Which frowns on the valley that
opens beneath;
Oft have I braved the chill night-
tempest's fury,
Whilst around me, I thought, echoed
murmurs of death.

III

And now, whilst the winds of the
mountain are howling,
O father! thy voice seems to strike
on mine ear; 10
In air whilst the tide of the night-storm
is rolling,
It breaks on the pause of the ele-
ments' jar.

I. *Victoria: without title, 1811.*

II. *On the Dark, &c.: without title, 1811; The Father's Spectre, Rossetti, 1870.*

IV

On the wing of the whirlwind which
 roars o'er the mountain
 Perhaps rides the ghost of my sire
 who is dead;
 On the mist of the tempest which hangs
 o'er the fountain, ¹⁵
 Whilst a wreath of dark vapour en-
 circles his head.

III.—SISTER ROSA: A BALLAD

I

THE death-bell beats!—
 The mountain repeats
 The echoing sound of the knell;
 And the dark Monk now
 Wraps the cowl round his brow, ⁵
 As he sits in his lonely cell.

II

And the cold hand of death
 Chills his shuddering breath,
 As he lists to the fearful lay
 Which the ghosts of the sky, ¹⁰
 As they sweep wildly by,
 Sing to departed day.
 And they sing of the hour
 When the stern fates had power
 To resolve Rosa's form to its clay. ¹⁵

III

But that hour is past;
 And that hour was the last
 Of peace to the dark Monk's brain.
 Bitter tears, from his eyes, gushed
 silent and fast;
 And he strove to suppress them in vain.

IV

Then his fair cross of gold he dashed
 on the floor, ²¹
 When the death-knell struck on his
 ear.—
 'Delight is in store
 For her evermore;
 But for me is fate, horror, and fear.' ²⁵

V

Then his eyes wildly rolled,
 When the death-bell tolled,

And he raged in terrific woe.
 And he stamped on the ground,—
 But when ceased the sound, ³⁰
 Tears again began to flow.

VI

And the ice of despair
 Chilled the wild throb of care,
 And he sate in mute agony still;
 Till the night-stars shone through the
 cloudless air, ³⁵
 And the pale moonbeam slept on the
 hill.

VII

Then he knelt in his cell:—
 And the horrors of hell
 Were delights to his agonized pain,
 And he prayed to God to dissolve the
 spell, ⁴⁰
 Which else must for ever remain.

VIII

And in fervent pray'r he knelt on the
 ground,
 Till the abbey bell struck One:
 His feverish blood ran chill at the
 sound:
 A voice hollow and horrible murmured
 around— ⁴⁵
 'The term of thy penance is done!'

IX

Grew dark the night;
 The moonbeam bright
 Waxed faint on the mountain high;
 And, from the black hill, ⁵⁰
 Went a voice cold and still,—
 'Monk! thou art free to die.'

X

Then he rose on his feet,
 And his heart loud did beat,
 And his limbs they were palsied with
 dread; ⁵⁵
 Whilst the grave's clammy dew
 O'er his pale forehead grew;
 And he shuddered to sleep with the dead.

XI

And the wild midnight storm
 Raved around his tall form, ⁶⁰

As he sought the chapel's gloom :
 And the sunk grass did sigh
 To the wind, bleak and high,
 As he searched for the new-made tomb.

XII

And forms, dark and high, 65
 Seemed around him to fly,
 And mingle their yells with the blast :
 And on the dark wall
 Half-seen shadows did fall,
 As enhorrored he onward passed. 70

XIII

And the storm-fiends wild rave
 O'er the new-made grave,
 And dread shadows linger around.
 The Monk called on God his soul to
 save,
 And, in horror, sank on the ground. 75

XIV

Then despair nerved his arm
 To dispel the charm,
 And he burst Rosa's coffin asunder.
 And the fierce storm did swell
 More terrific and fell, 80
 And louder pealed the thunder.

XV

And laughed, in joy, the fiendish
 throng,
 Mixed with ghosts of the mouldering
 dead :
 And their grisly wings, as they floated
 along,
 Whistled in murmurs dread. 85

XVI

And her skeleton form the dead Nun
 reared
 Which dripped with the chill dew of
 hell.
 In her half-eaten eyeballs two pale
 flames appeared,
 And triumphant their gleam on the
 dark Monk glared,
 As he stood within the cell. 90

XVII

And her lank hand lay on his shudder-
 ing brain ;
 But each power was nerved by fear.—
 'I never, henceforth, may breathe
 again ;
 Death now ends mine anguished pain.—
 The grave yawns,—we meet there.'

XVIII

And her skeleton lungs did utter the
 sound, 96
 So deadly, so lone, and so fell,
 That in long vibrations shuddered the
 ground ;
 And as the stern notes floated around,
 A deep groan was answered from hell.

IV.—ST. IRVYNE'S TOWER

I

How swiftly through Heaven's wide
 expanse
 Bright day's resplendent colours
 fade !
 How sweetly does the moonbeam's
 glance
 With silver tint St. Irvyne's glade !

II

No cloud along the spangled air, 5
 Is borne upon the evening breeze ;
 How solemn is the scene ! how fair
 The moonbeams rest upon the trees !

III

Yon dark gray turret glimmers white,
 Upon it sits the mournful owl ; 10
 Along the stillness of the night,
 Her melancholy shrieking roll.

IV

But not alone on Irvyne's tower,
 The silver moonbeam pours her ray ;
 It gleams upon the ivied bower, 15
 It dances in the cascade's spray.

V

'Ah ! why do dark'ning shades conceal
 The hour, when man must cease to be ?

Why may not human minds unveil
The dim mists of futurity? 20

VI

'The keenness of the world hath torn
The heart which opens to its blast;
Despised, neglected, and forlorn,
Sinks the wretch in death at last.'

V.—BEREAVEMENT

I

How stern are the woes of the desolate
mourner,
As he bends in still grief o'er the
hallowèd bier,
As enanguished he turns from the laugh
of the scorner,
And drops, to Perfection's remem-
brance, a tear;
When floods of despair down his pale
cheek are streaming, 5
When no blissful hope on his bosom is
beaming,
Or, if lulled for awhile, soon he starts
from his dreaming,
And finds torn the soft ties to affec-
tion so dear.

II

Ah! when shall day dawn on the night
of the grave,
Or summer succeed to the winter of
death? 10
Rest awhile, hapless victim, and
Heaven will save
The spirit, that faded away with the
breath.
Eternity points in its amaranth bower,
Where no clouds of fate o'er the sweet
prospect lower,
Unspeakable pleasure, of goodness the
dower, 15
When woe fades away like the mist
of the heath.

VI.—THE DROWNED LOVER

I

AH! faint are her limbs, and her foot-
step is weary,
Yet far must the desolate wanderer
roam;

Though the tempest is stern, and the
mountain is dreary,
She must quit at deep midnight her
pitiless home.
I see her swift foot dash the dew from
the whortle, 5
As she rapidly hastes to the green grove
of myrtle;
And I hear, as she wraps round her
figure the kirtle,
'Stay thy boat on the lake,—dearest
Henry, I come.'

II

High swelled in her bosom the throb of
affection,
As lightly her form bounded over the
lea, 10
And arose in her mind every dear
recollection;
'I come, dearest Henry, and wait but
for thee.'
How sad, when dear hope every sorrow
is soothing,
When sympathy's swell the soft bosom
is moving,
And the mind the mild joys of affection
is proving, 15
Is the stern voice of fate that bids
happiness flee!

III

Oh! dark lowered the clouds on that
horrible eve,
And the moon dimly gleamed through
the tempestèd air;
Oh! how could fond visions such soft-
ness deceive?
Oh! how could false hope rend a
bosom so fair? 20
Thy love's pallid corse the wild surges
are laving,
O'er his form the fierce swell of the
tempest is raving;
But, fear not, parting spirit; thy good-
ness is saving,
In eternity's bowers, a seat for thee
there.

V. *Bereavement: Song, 1811.*

VI. *The Drowned Lover: Song, 1811; The Lake-Storm, Rossetti, 1870.*

POSTHUMOUS FRAGMENTS OF MARGARET NICHOLSON

Being Poems found amongst the Papers of that noted Female who attempted the life of the King in 1786. Edited by John Fitzvictor.

[The *Posthumous Fragments*, published at Oxford by Shelley, appeared in November, 1810. See *Bibliographical List*.]

ADVERTISEMENT

THE energy and native genius of these Fragments must be the only apology which the Editor can make for thus intruding them on the public notice. The first I found with no title, and have left it so. It is intimately connected with the dearest interests of universal happiness; and much as we may deplore the fatal and enthusiastic tendency which the ideas of this poor female had acquired, we cannot fail to pay the tribute of unequivocal regret to the departed memory of genius, which, had it been rightly organized, would have made that intellect, which has since become the victim of frenzy and despair, a most brilliant ornament to society.

In case the sale of these Fragments evinces that the public have any curiosity to be presented with a more copious collection of my unfortunate Aunt's poems, I have other papers in my possession which shall, in that case, be subjected to their notice. It may be supposed they require much arrangement; but I send the following to the press in the same state in which they came into my possession. J. F.

WAR

AMBITION, power, and avarice, now
have hurled
Death, fate, and ruin, on a bleeding
world.
See! on yon heath what countless
victims lie,
Hark! what loud shrieks ascend through
yonder sky;
Tell then the cause, 'tis sure the
avenger's rage 5

Has swept these myriads from life's
crowded stage:
Hark to that groan, an anguished hero
dies,
He shudders in death's latest agonies;
Yet does a fleeting hectic flush his
cheek,
Yet does his parting breath essay to
speak— 10
'Oh God! my wife, my children—
Monarch thou
For whose support this fainting frame
lies low;
For whose support in distant lands I
bleed,
Let his friends' welfare be the warrior's
meed.
He hears me not—ah! no—kings can-
not hear, 15
For passion's voice has dulled their
listless ear.
To thee, then, mighty God, I lift my
moan,
Thou wilt not scorn a suppliant's
anguished groan.
Oh! now I die—but still is death's
fierce pain—
God hears my prayer—we meet, we
meet again. 20
He spake, reclined him on death's
bloody bed,
And with a parting groan his spirit fled.
Oppressors of mankind to *you* we owe
The baleful streams from whence these
miseries flow;
For you how many a mother weeps her
son, 25
Snatched from life's course ere half his
race was run!
For you how many a widow drops a
tear,
In silent anguish, on her husband's
bier!

War: the title is Woodberry's, 1893; no title, 1810.

'Is it then Thine, Almighty Power,'
 she cries,
 'Whence tears of endless sorrow dim
 these eyes?' 30
 Is this the system which Thy powerful
 sway,
 Which else in shapeless chaos sleeping
 lay,
 Formed and approved?—it cannot be—
 but oh!
 Forgive me, Heaven, my brain is warped
 by woe.
 'Tis not—He never bade the war-note
 swell, 35
 He never triumphed in the work of
 hell—
 Monarchs of earth! thine is the baleful
 deed,
 Thine are the crimes for which thy
 subjects bleed.
 Ah! when will come the sacred fated
 time,
 When man unsullied by his leaders'
 crime, 40
 Despising wealth, ambition, pomp, and
 pride,
 Will stretch him fearless by his foe-
 men's side?
 Ah! when will come the time, when
 o'er the plain
 No more shall death and desolation
 reign?
 When will the sun smile on the blood-
 less field, 45
 And the stern warrior's arm the sickle
 wield?
 Not whilst some King, in cold am-
 bition's dreams,
 Plans for the field of death his plodding
 schemes;
 Not whilst for private pique the public
 fall,
 And one frail mortal's mandate governs
 all. 50
 Swelled with command and mad with
 dizzying sway;
 Who sees unmoved his myriads fade
 away.
 Careless who lives or dies—so that he
 gains

Some trivial point for which he took
 the pains.
 What then are Kings?—I see the
 trembling crowd, 55
 I hear their fulsome clamours echoed
 loud;
 Their stern oppressor pleased appears
 awhile,
 But April's sunshine is a Monarch's
 smile—
 Kings are but dust—the last eventful
 day
 Will level all and make them lose their
 sway; 60
 Will dash the sceptre from the Mon-
 arch's hand,
 And from the warrior's grasp wrest the
 ensanguined brand.
 Oh! Peace, soft Peace, art thou for
 ever gone,
 Is thy fair form indeed for ever
 flown?
 And love and concord hast thou swept
 away, 65
 As if incongruous with thy parted
 sway?
 Alas, I fear thou hast, for none appear.
 Now o'er the palsied earth stalks giant
 Fear,
 With War, and Woe, and Terror, in his
 train;
 List'ning he pauses on the embattled
 plain, 70
 Then speeding swiftly o'er the en-
 sanguined heath,
 Has left the frightful work to Hell and
 Death.
 See! gory Ruin yokes his blood-stained
 car,
 He scents the battle's carnage from
 afar;
 Hell and Destruction mark his mad
 career, 75
 He tracks the rapid step of hurrying
 Fear;
 Whilst ruined towns and smoking cities
 tell,
 That thy work, Monarch, is the work
 of Hell.
 'It is thy work!' I hear a voice repeat,

Shakes the broad basis of thy blood-
 stained seat; 80
 And at the orphan's sigh, the widow's
 moan,
 Totters the fabric of thy guilt-stained
 throne—
 'It is thy work, O Monarch;' now the
 sound
 Fainter and fainter, yet is borne
 around,
 Yet to enthusiast ears the murmurs
 tell 85
 That Heaven, indignant at the work of
 Hell,
 Will soon the cause, the hated cause
 remove,
 Which tears from earth peace, inno-
 cence, and love.

FRAGMENT

SUPPOSED TO BE AN EPITHALAMIUM
 OF FRANCIS RAVAILLAC AND
 CHARLOTTE CORDAY

'Tis midnight now — athwart the
 murky air,
 Dank lurid meteors shoot a livid
 gleam;
 From the dark storm-clouds flashes a
 fearful glare,
 It shows the bending oak, the roaring
 stream.
 I pondered on the woes of lost man-
 kind, 5
 I pondered on the ceaseless rage of
 Kings;
 My rapt soul dwelt upon the ties that
 bind
 The mazy volume of commingling
 things,
 When fell and wild misrule to man
 stern sorrow brings.
 I heard a yell—it was not the knell, 10
 When the blasts on the wild lake sleep,
 That floats on the pause of the summer
 gale's swell,
 O'er the breast of the waveless deep.
 I thought it had been death's accents
 cold
 That bade me recline on the shore; 15

I laid mine hot head on the surge-beaten
 mould,
 And thought to breathe no more.

But a heavenly sleep
 That did suddenly steep
 In balm my bosom's pain, 20
 Pervaded my soul,
 And free from control,
 Did mine intellect range again.

Methought enthroned upon a silvery
 cloud,
 Which floated mid a strange and
 brilliant light; 25
 My form upborne by viewless aether rode,
 And spurned the lessening realms of
 earthly night.
 What heavenly notes burst on my
 ravished ears,
 What beauteous spirits met my
 dazzled eye!
 Hark! louder swells the music of the
 spheres, 30
 More clear the forms of speechless
 bliss float by,
 And heavenly gestures suit aethereal
 melody.

But fairer than the spirits of the air,
 More graceful than the Sylph of
 symmetry,
 Than the enthusiast's fancied love
 more fair, 35
 Were the bright forms that swept the
 azure sky.
 Enthroned in roseate light, a heavenly
 band
 Strewed flowers of bliss that never
 fade away;
 They welcome virtue to its native land,
 And songs of triumph greet the
 joyous day 40
 When endless bliss the woes of fleeting
 life repay.

Congenial minds will seek their kindred
 soul,
 E'en though the tide of time has
 rolled between;
 They mock weak matter's impotent
 control,

And seek of endless life the eternal scene. 45

At death's vain summons *this* will never die,

In Nature's chaos *this* will not decay—
These are the bands which closely,
warmly, tie

Thy soul, O Charlotte, 'yond this chain of clay,

To him who thine must be till time shall fade away. 50

Yes, Francis! thine was the dear knife that tore

A tyrant's heart-strings from his guilty breast,

Thine was the daring at a tyrant's gore,
To smile in triumph, to condemn the rest;

And thine, loved glory of thy sex! to tear 55

From its base shrine a despot's haughty soul,

To laugh at sorrow in secure despair,
To mock, with smiles, life's lingering control,

And triumph mid the griefs that round thy fate did roll.

Yes! the fierce spirits of the avenging deep 60

With endless tortures goad their guilty shades.

I see the lank and ghastly spectres sweep
Along the burning length of yon arcades;

And I see Satan stalk athwart the plain;
He hastes along the burning soil of Hell. 65

'Welcome, ye despots, to my dark domain,

With maddening joy mine anguished senses swell

To welcome to their home the friends
I love so well.'

Hark! to those notes, how sweet, how thrilling sweet 69

They echo to the sound of angels' feet.

Oh haste to the bower where roses are spread,

For there is prepared thy nuptial bed.
Oh haste—hark! hark!—they're gone.

Chorus of Spirits.

Stay, ye days of contentment and joy,
Whilst love every care is erasing, 75

Stay ye pleasures that never can cloy,
And ye spirits that can never cease pleasing.

And if any soft passion be near,
Which mortals, frail mortals, can know,

Let love shed on the bosom a tear, 80
And dissolve the chill ice-drop of woe.

SYMPHONY.

Francis.

'Soft, my dearest angel, stay,
Oh! you suck my soul away;

Suck on, suck on, I glow, I glow!
Tides of maddening passion roll, 85

And streams of rapture drown my soul.

Now give me one more billing kiss,
Let your lips now repeat the bliss,

Endless kisses steal my breath,
No life can equal such a death.' 90

Charlotte.

'Oh! yes I will kiss thine eyes so fair,

And I will clasp thy form;
Serene is the breath of the balmy air,

But I think, love, thou feelest me warm,

And I will recline on thy marble neck
Till I mingle into thee; 96

And I will kiss the rose on thy cheek,
And thou shalt give kisses to me.

For here is no morn to flout our delight,

Oh! dost thou not joy at this? 100

And here we may lie an endless night,
A long, long night of bliss.'

Spirits! when raptures move,
Say what it is to love,

When passion's tear stands on the
cheek, 105

When bursts the unconscious sigh;
And the tremulous lips dare not speak
What is told by the soul-felt eye.

But what is sweeter to revenge's ear
Than the fell tyrant's last expiring
yell? 110

Yes! than love's sweetest blisses 'tis
more dear

To drink the floatings of a despot's
knell.

I wake—'tis done—'tis over.

DESPAIR

AND canst thou mock mine agony,
thus calm

In cloudless radiance, Queen of silver
night?

Can you, ye flow'rets, spread your per-
fumed balm

Mid pearly gems of dew that shine
so bright?

And you wild winds, thus can you sleep
so still 5

Whilst throbs the tempest of my
breast so high?

Can the fierce night-fiends rest on
yonder hill,

And, in the eternal mansions of the
sky,

Can the directors of the storm in power-
less silence lie?

Hark! I hear music on the zephyr's
wing, 10

Louder it floats along the unruffled
sky;

Some fairy sure has touched the view-
less string—

Now faint in distant air the murmurs
die.

Awile it stills the tide of agony.

Now—now it loftier swells—again
stern woe 15

Arises with the awakening melody.

Again fierce torments, such as demons
know,

In bitterer, feller tide, on this torn
bosom flow.

Arise ye sightless spirits of the storm,
Ye unseen minstrels of the aëreal
song. 20

Pour the fierce tide around this lonely
form,

And roll the tempest's wildest swell
along.

Dart the red lightning, wing the forkèd
flash,

Pour from thy cloud-formed hills the
thunder's roar;

Arouse the whirlwind—and let ocean
dash 25

In fiercest tumult on the rocking
shore,—

Destroy this life or let earth's fabric be
no more.

Yes! every tie that links me here is
dead;

Mysterious Fate, thy mandate I obey,
Since hope and peace, and joy, for aye
are fled, 30

I come, terrific power, I come away.
Then o'er this ruined soul let spirits of
Hell,

In triumph, laughing wildly, mock
its pain;

And though with direst pangs mine
heart-strings swell,

I'll echo back their deadly yells
again, 35

Cursing the power that ne'er made
aught in vain.

FRAGMENT

YES! all is past—swift time has fled
away,

Yet its swell pauses on my sickening
mind;

How long will horror nerve this frame
of clay?

I'm dead, and lingers yet my soul
behind.

Oh! powerful Fate, revoke thy deadly
spell, 5

And yet that may not ever, ever be,

Heaven will not smile upon the work of
Hell ;

Ah! no, for Heaven cannot smile on me;
Fate, envious Fate, has sealed my way-
ward destiny.

I sought the cold brink of the midnight
surge, 10

I sighed beneath its wave to hide my
woes,

The rising tempest sung a funeral dirge,
And on the blast a frightful yell arose.

Wild flew the meteors o'er the maddened
main,

Wilder did grief athwart my bosom
glare; 15

Stilled was the unearthly howling, and
a strain,

Swelled mid the tumult of the bat-
tling air,

'Twas like a spirit's song, but yet more
soft and fair.

I met a maniac—like he was to me,
I said—'Poor victim, wherefore dost
thou roam? 20

And canst thou not contend with agony,
That thus at midnight thou dost quit
thine home?'

'Ah there she sleeps: cold is her blood-
less form,

And I will go to slumber in her grave;
And then our ghosts, whilst raves the
maddened storm, 25

Will sweep at midnight o'er the
wildered wave;

Wilt thou our lowly beds with tears of
pity lave?'

'Ah! no, I cannot shed the pitying tear,
This breast is cold, this heart can
feel no more; 29

But I can rest me on thy chilling bier,
Can shriek in horror to the tempest's
roar.'

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THE SPECTRAL HORSEMAN

WHAT was the shriek that struck
Fancy's ear

As it sate on the ruins of time that is
past?

Hark! it floats on the fitful blast of the
wind,
And breathes to the pale moon a
funeral sigh.

It is the Benshie's moan on the storm, ⁵
Or a shivering fiend that thirsting for
sin,

Seeks murder and guilt when virtue
sleeps,

Winged with the power of some ruth-
less king,

And sweeps o'er the breast of the
prostrate plain.

It was not a fiend from the regions of
Hell 10

That poured its low moan on the still-
ness of night:

It was not a ghost of the guilty dead,
Nor a yelling vampire reeking with
gore;

But aye at the close of seven years'
end,

That voice is mixed with the swell of
the storm, 15

And aye at the close of seven years'
end,

A shapeless shadow that sleeps on the
hill

Awakens and floats on the mist of the
heath.

It is not the shade of a murdered
man,

Who has rushed uncalled to the throne
of his God, 20

And howls in the pause of the eddying
storm.

This voice is low, cold, hollow, and chill,
'Tis not heard by the ear, but is felt in
the soul.

'Tis more frightful far than the death-
daemon's scream,

Or the laughter of fiends when they
howl o'er the corpse 25

Of a man who has sold his soul to
Hell.

It tells the approach of a mystic form,
A white courser bears the shadowy
sprite;

More thin they are than the mists of
the mountain,

When the clear moonlight sleeps on the
 waveless lake. 30
 More pale *his* check than the snows of
 Nithona,
 When winter rides on the northern
 blast,
 And howls in the midst of the leafless
 wood.
 Yet when the fierce swell of the tempest
 is raving,
 And the whirlwinds howl in the caves
 of Inisfallen, 35
 Still secure mid the wildest war of the
 sky,
 The phantom courser scours the waste,
 And his rider howls in the thunder's
 roar.
 O'er him the fierce bolts of avenging
 Heaven
 Pause, as in fear, to strike his head. 40
 The meteors of midnight recoil from
 his figure,
 Yet the 'wildered peasant, that oft
 passes by,
 With wonder beholds the blue flash
 through his form:
 And his voice, though faint as the sighs
 of the dead,
 The startled passenger shudders to
 hear, 45
 More distinct than the thunder's wildest
 roar.
 Then does the dragon, who, chained in
 the caverns
 To eternity, curses the champion of
 Erin,
 Moan and yell loud at the lone hour of
 midnight,
 And twine his vast wreaths round the
 forms of the daemons; 50
 Then in agony roll his death-swimming
 eyeballs,
 Though 'wildered by death, yet never
 to die!
 Then he shakes from his skeleton folds
 the nightmares,
 Who, shrieking in agony, seek the
 couch
 Of some fevered wretch who courts
 sleep in vain; 55

Then the tombless ghosts of the guilty
 dead
 In horror pause on the fitful gale.
 They float on the swell of the eddying
 tempest,
 And scared seek the caves of gigan-
 tic . . .
 Where their thin forms pour unearthly
 sounds 60
 On the blast that sweeps the breast of
 the lake,
 And mingles its swell with the moon-
 light air.

MELODY TO A SCENE OF FORMER TIMES

ART thou indeed forever gone,
 Forever, ever, lost to me?
 Must this poor bosom beat alone,
 Or beat at all, if not for thee?
 Ah! why was love to mortals given, 5
 To lift them to the height of Heaven,
 Or dash them to the depths of Hell?
 Yet I do not reproach thee, dear!
 Ah, no! the agonies that swell
 This panting breast, this frenzied
 brain, 10
 Might wake my ——'s slumb'ring
 tear.
 Oh! Heaven is witness I did love,
 And Heaven does know I love thee still,
 Does know the fruitless sick'ning thrill,
 When reason's judgement vainly
 strove 15
 To blot thee from my memory;
 But which might never, never be.
 Oh! I appeal to that blest day
 When passion's wildest ecstasy
 Was coldness to the joys I knew, 20
 When every sorrow sunk away.
 Oh! I had never lived before,
 But now those blisses are no more.
 And now I cease to live again,
 I do not blame thee, love; ah, no! 25
 The breast that feels this anguished woe
 Throbs for thy happiness alone.
 Two years of speechless bliss are gone,
 I thank thee, dearest, for the dream.
 'Tis night—what faint and distant
 scream 30

Comes on the wild and fitful blast?
 It moans for pleasures that are past,
 It moans for days that are gone by.
 Oh! lagging hours, how slow you fly!
 I see a dark and lengthened vale, 35
 The black view closes with the tomb;
 But darker is the lowering gloom
 That shades the intervening dale.
 In visioned slumber for awhile
 I seem again to share thy smile, 40
 I seem to hang upon thy tone.
 Again you say, 'Confide in me,
 For I am thine, and thine alone,
 And thine must ever, ever be.'
 But oh! awak'ning still anew, 45
 Athwart my enanguished senses flew
 A fiercer, deadlier agony!

[End of *Posthumous Fragments of Margaret Nicholson.*]

STANZA FROM A TRANSLATION OF THE MARSEILLAISE HYMN

[Published by Forman, *P. W. of P. B. S.*,
 1876; dated 1810.]

TREMBLE, Kings despised of man!
 Ye traitors to your Country,
 Tremble! Your parricidal plan
 At length shall meet its destiny . . .
 We all are soldiers fit to fight, 5
 But if we sink in glory's night
 Our mother Earth will give ye new
 The brilliant pathway to pursue
 Which leads to Death or Victory . . .

BIGOTRY'S VICTIM

[Published (without title) by Hogg,
Life of Shelley, 1858; dated 1809-10. The
 title is Rossetti's (1870).]

I

DARES the lama, most fleet of the sons
 of the wind,
 The lion to rouse from his skull-
 covered lair?
 When the tiger approaches can the
 fast-fleeting hind
 Repose trust in his footsteps of air?
 No! Abandoned he sinks in a trance of
 despair, 5

The monster transfixes his prey,
 On the sand flows his life-blood
 away;
 Whilst India's rocks to his death-yells
 reply,
 Protracting the horrible harmony.

II

Yet the fowl of the desert, when danger
 encroaches, 10
 Dares fearless to perish defending her
 brood,
 Though the fiercest of cloud-piercing
 tyrants approaches
 Thirsting—ay, thirsting for blood;
 And demands, like mankind, his
 brother for food;
 Yet more lenient, more gentle
 than they; 15
 For hunger, not glory, the prey
 Must perish. Revenge does not howl
 in the dead.
 Nor ambition with fame crown the
 murderer's head.

III

Though weak as the lama that bounds
 on the mountains,
 And endued not with fast-fleeting
 footsteps of air, 20
 Yet, yet will I draw from the purest of
 fountains,
 Though a fiercer than tiger is there.
 Though, more dreadful than death, it
 scatters despair,
 Though its shadow eclipses the
 day,
 And the darkness of deepest
 dismay 25
 Spreads the influence of soul-chilling
 terror around,
 And lowers on the corpses, that rot on
 the ground.

IV

They came to the fountain to draw
 from its stream
 Waves too pure, too celestial, for
 mortals to see;
 They bathed for awhile in its silvery
 beam, 30

Then perished, and perished like
me.
For in vain from the grasp of the Bigot
I flee;
The most tenderly loved of my
soul
Are slaves to his hated control.
He pursues me, he blasts me! 'Tis in
vain that I fly: 35
What remains, but to curse him,—to
curse him and die?

ON AN ICICLE THAT CLUNG
TO THE GRASS OF A GRAVE

[Published (without title) by Hogg,
Life of Shelley, 1858; dated 1809-10. The
poem, with title as above, is included in
the Esdaile MS. Book.]

I

Oh! take the pure gem to where
southerly breezes,
Waft repose to some bosom as faith-
ful as fair,
In which the warm current of love
never freezes,
As it rises unmingled with selfishness
there,
Which, untainted by pride, unpol-
luted by care, 5
Might dissolve the dim icedrop, might
bid it arise,
Too pure for these regions, to gleam in
the skies.

II

Or where the stern warrior, his country
defending,
Dares fearless the dark-rolling battle
to pour,
Or o'er the fell corpse of a dread tyrant
bending, 10
Where patriotism red with his guilt-
reeking gore
Plants Liberty's flag on the slave-
peopled shore,
With victory's cry, with the shout of
the free,
Let it fly, taintless Spirit, to mingle
with thee.

III

For I found the pure gem, when the
daybeam returning, 15
Ineffectual gleams on the snow-
covered plain,
When to others the wished-for arrival
of morning
Brings relief to long visions of soul-
racking pain;
But regret is an insult—to grieve is
in vain:
And why should we grieve that a spirit
so fair 20
Seeks Heaven to mix with its own
kindred there?

IV

But still 'twas some Spirit of kindness
descending
To share in the load of mortality's
woe,
Who over thy lowly-built sepulchre
bending
Bade sympathy's tenderest teardrop
to flow. 25
Not for *thee* soft compassion celestials
did know,
But if *angels* can weep, sure *man* may
repine,
May weep in mute grief o'er thy low-
laid shrine.

V

And did I then say, for the altar of
glory,
That the earliest, the loveliest of
flowers I'd entwine, 30
Though with millions of blood-reeking
victims 'twas gory,
Though the tears of the widow pol-
luted its shrine,
Though around it the orphans, the
fatherless pine?
Oh! Fame, all thy glories I'd yield for
a tear
To shed on the grave of a heart so
sincere. 35

LOVE

[Published (without title) by Hogg, *Life of Shelley*, 1858; dated 1811. The title is Rossetti's (1870).]

WHY is it said thou canst not live
In a youthful breast and fair,
Since thou eternal life canst give,
Canst bloom for ever there? ⁴
Since withering pain no power possessed,
Nor age, to blanch thy vermeil hue,
Nor time's dread victor, death, confessed,

Though bathed with his poison dew,
Still thou retain'st unchanging bloom,
Fixed tranquil, even in the tomb. ¹⁰
And oh! when on the blest, reviving,
The day-star dawns of love,
Each element of soul surviving
More vivid, soars above,
Hast thou ne'er felt a rapturous thrill,
Like June's warm breath, athwart
thee fly, ¹⁶

O'er each idea then to steal,
When other passions die?
Felt it in some wild noonday dream,
When sitting by the lonely stream, ²⁰
Where Silence says, 'Mine is the dell';
And not a murmur from the plain,
And not an echo from the fell,
Disputes her silent reign.

ON A FÊTE AT CARLTON
HOUSE: FRAGMENT

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870; dated 1811.]

By the mossy brink,
With me the Prince shall sit and
think;
Shall muse in visioned Regency,
Rapt in bright dreams of dawning
Royalty.

TO A STAR

[Published (without title) by Hogg, *Life of Shelley*, 1858; dated 1811. The title is Rossetti's (1870).]

SWEET star, which gleaming o'er the
darksome scene
Through fleecy clouds of silvery radi-
ance fliest,

Spanglet of light on evening's shadowy
veil,

Which shrouds the day-beam from the
waveless lake,

Lighting the hour of sacred love; more
sweet ⁵

Than the expiring morn-star's paly
fires:—

Sweet star! When wearied Nature
sinks to sleep,

And all is hushed,—all, save the voice
of Love,

Whose broken murmurings swell the
balmy blast

Of soft Favonius, which at intervals ¹⁰
Sighs in the ear of stillness, art thou
aught but

Lulling the slaves of interest to repose
With that mild, pitying gaze? Oh, I

would look
In thy dear beam till every bond of sense

Became enamoured—— ¹⁵

TO MARY WHO DIED IN
THIS OPINION

[Published by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870; dated 1810–11.]

I

MAIDEN, quench the glare of sorrow

Struggling in thine haggard eye:

Firmness dare to borrow

From the wreck of destiny;

For the ray morn's bloom revealing ⁵

Can never boast so bright an hue

As that which mocks concealing,

And sheds its loveliest light on you.

II

Yet is the tie departed

Which bound thy lovely soul to bliss?

Has it left thee broken-hearted ¹¹

In a world so cold as this?

Yet, though, fainting fair one,

Sorrow's self thy cup has given,

Dream thou'lt meet thy dear one,

Never more to part, in Heaven. ¹⁶

III

Existence would I barter

For a dream so dear as thine,

And smile to die a martyr
On affection's bloodless shrine. 20
Nor would I change for pleasure
That withered hand and ashy cheek,
If my heart enshrined a treasure
Such as forces thine to break.

A TALE OF SOCIETY AS IT
IS: FROM FACTS, 1811

[Published (from Esdaile MS. with title as above) by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870. Rossetti's title is *Mother and Son*.]

I

SHE was an agèd woman; and the years
Which she had numbered on her toil-
some way
Had bowed her natural powers to
decay.

She was an agèd woman; yet the ray
Which faintly glimmered through her
starting tears, 5
Pressed into light by silent misery,
Hath soul's imperishable energy.

She was a cripple, and incapable
To add one mite to gold-fed luxury:
And therefore did her spirit dimly
feel 10
That poverty, the crime of tainting
stain,
Would merge her in its depths, never
to rise again.

II

One only son's love had supported
her.
She long had struggled with in-
firmity,
Lingering to human life-scenes; for
to die, 15
When fate has spared to rend some
mental tie,
Would many wish, and surely fewer
dare.
But, when the tyrant's bloodhounds
forced the child
For his cursed power unhallowed
arms to wield—

28 grieve *Esdaile MS.*; feel, 1870.
1870.

Bend to another's will—become a
thing 20
More senseless than the sword of
battlefield—
Then did she feel keen sorrow's
keenest sting;
And many years had passed ere com-
fort they would bring.

III

For seven years did this poor woman
live
In unparticipated solitude. 25
Thou mightst have seen her in the
forest rude
Picking the scattered remnants of
its wood.

If human, thou mightst then have
learned to grieve.
The gleanings of precarious charity
Her scantiness of food did scarce
supply. 30

The proofs of an unspeaking sor-
row dwelt
Within her ghastly hollowness of eye:
Each arrow of the season's change
she felt.
Yet still she groans, ere yet her race
were run,
One only hope: it was—once more to
see her son. 35

IV

It was an eve of June, when every
star
Spoke peace from Heaven to those
on earth that live.

She rested on the moor. 'Twas
such an eve
When first her soul began indeed
to grieve:

Then he was here; now he is very
far. 40

The sweetness of the balmy evening
A sorrow o'er her agèd soul did fling,
Yet not devoid of rapture's min-
gled tear:

A balm was in the poison of the
sting.

37 to those on earth that live *Esdaile MS.*; omitted,

This aged sufferer for many a year
 Had never felt such comfort. She
 suppressed 46
 A sigh—and turning round, clasped
 William to her breast!

V

And, though his form was wasted by
 the woe
 Which tyrants on their victims love
 to wreak,
 Though his sunk eyeballs and his
 faded cheek 50
 Of slavery's violence and scorn did
 speak,
 Yet did the aged woman's bosom
 glow.
 The vital fire seemed re-illumed
 within
 By this sweet unexpected welcoming.
 Oh, consummation of the fondest
 hope 55
 That ever soared on Fancy's wildest
 wing!
 Oh, tenderness that foundst so
 sweet a scope!
 Prince who dost pride thee on thy
 mighty sway,
 When *thou* canst feel such love, thou
 shalt be great as they!

VI

Her son, compelled, the country's
 foes had fought, 60
 Had bled in battle; and the stern
 control
 Which ruled his sinews and coerced
 his soul
 Utterly poisoned life's unmingled
 bowl,
 And unsubduable evils on him
 brought.
 He was the shadow of the lusty child
 Who, when the time of summer
 season smiled, 66
 Did earn for her a meal of
 honesty,
 And with affectionate discourse be-
 guiled

The keen attacks of pain and
 poverty;
 Till Power, as envying her this only
 joy, 70
 From her maternal bosom tore the
 unhappy boy.

VII

And now cold charity's unwelcome
 dole
 Was insufficient to support the pair;
 And they would perish rather than
 would bear
 The law's stern slavery, and the
 insolent stare 75
 With which law loves to rend the
 poor man's soul—
 The bitter scorn, the spirit-sinking
 noise
 Of heartless mirth which women,
 men, and boys
 Wake in this scene of legal misery.

TO THE REPUBLICANS OF
NORTH AMERICA

[Published (from the Esdaile MS. with
 title as above) by Rossetti, *Complete P. W.*
of P. B. S., 1870; dated 1812. Rossetti's
 title is *The Mexican Revolution*.]

I

BROTHERS! between you and me
 Whirlwinds sweep and billows roar:
 Yet in spirit oft I see
 On thy wild and winding shore
 Freedom's bloodless banners wave,— 5
 Feel the pulses of the brave
 Unextinguished in the grave,—
 See them drenched in sacred gore,—
 Catch the warrior's gasping breath
 Murmuring 'Liberty or death!' 10

II

Shout aloud! Let every slave,
 Crouching at Corruption's throne,
 Start into a man, and brave
 Racks and chains without a groan;
 And the castle's heartless glow, 15
 And the hovel's vice and woe,

Fade like gaudy flowers that blow—
Weeds that peep, and then are gone
Whilst, from misery's ashes risen,
Love shall burst the captive's prison.

III

Cotopaxi! bid the sound 21
Through thy sister mountains ring,
Till each valley smile around
At the blissful welcoming!
And, O thou stern Ocean deep, 25
Thou whose foamy billows sweep
Shores where thousands wake to weep
Whilst they curse a villain king,
On the winds that fan thy breast
Bear thou news of Freedom's rest! 30

IV

Can the daystar dawn of love,
Where the flag of war unfurled
Floats with crimson stain above
The fabric of a ruined world?
Never but to vengeance driven 35
When the patriot's spirit shriven
Seeks in death its native Heaven!
There, to desolation hurled,
Widowed love may watch thy bier,
Balm thee with its dying tear. 40

TO IRELAND

[Published, 1-10, by Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1870; 11-17, 25-28, by Dowden, *Life of Shelley*, 1887; 18-24 by Kingsland, *Poet-Lore*, July, 1892. Dated 1812.]

I

BEAR witness, Erin! when thine injured isle
Sees summer on its verdant pastures smile,
Its cornfields waving in the winds that sweep
The billowy surface of thy circling deep!
Thou tree whose shadow o'er the Atlantic gave 5
Peace, wealth and beauty, to its friendly wave,
its blossoms fade,
And blighted are the leaves that cast its shade;

Whilst the cold hand gathers its scanty fruit,
Whose chillness struck a canker to its root. 10

II

I could stand
Upon thy shores, O Erin, and could count
The billows that, in their unceasing swell,
Dash on thy beach, and every wave might seem
An instrument in Time the giant's grasp, 15
To burst the barriers of Eternity.
Proceed, thou giant, conquering and to conquer;
March on thy lonely way! The nations fall
Beneath thy noiseless footstep; pyramids
That for millenniums have defied the blast, 20
And laughed at lightnings, thou dost crush to nought.
Yon monarch, in his solitary pomp,
Is but the fungus of a winter day
That thy light footstep presses into dust.
Thou art a conqueror, Time; all things give way 25
Before thee but the 'fixed and virtuous will';
The sacred sympathy of soul which was
When thou wert not, which shall be when thou perishest.
.

ON ROBERT EMMET'S GRAVE

[Published from the Esdaile MS. book by Dowden, *Life of Shelley*, 1887; dated 1812.]

VI

No trump tells thy virtues—the grave where they rest
With thy dust shall remain unpolluted by fame,

Till thy foes, by the world and by
 fortune caressed,
 Shall pass like a mist from the light
 of thy name.

VII

When the storm-cloud that lowers o'er
 the day-beam is gone, 5
 Unchanged, unextinguished its life-
 spring will shine;
 When Erin has ceased with their
 memory to groan,
 She will smile through the tears of
 revival on thine.

THE RETROSPECT: CWM
 ELAN, 1812

[Published from the Esdaile MS. book by
 Dowden, *Life of Shelley*, 1887.]

A SCENE, which 'wildered fancy viewed
 In the soul's coldest solitude,
 With that same scene when peaceful
 love

Flings rapture's colour o'er the grove,
 When mountain, meadow, wood and
 stream 5

With unalloying glory gleam,
 And to the spirit's ear and eye
 Are unison and harmony.
 The moonlight was my dearer day;
 Then would I wander far away, 10
 And, lingering on the wild brook's
 shore

To hear its unremitting roar,
 Would lose in the ideal flow
 All sense of overwhelming woe;
 Or at the noiseless noon of night 15
 Would climb some heathy mountain's
 height,

And listen to the mystic sound
 That stole in fitful gasps around.
 I joyed to see the streaks of day
 Above the purple peaks decay, 20
 And watch the latest line of light
 Just mingling with the shades of night;
 For day with me was time of woe
 When even tears refused to flow;
 Then would I stretch my languid
 frame 25

Beneath the wild woods' gloomiest
 shade,
 And try to quench the ceaseless flame
 That on my withered vitals preyed;
 Would close mine eyes and dream I
 were

On some remote and friendless plain, 30
 And long to leave existence there,
 If with it I might leave the pain
 That with a finger cold and lean
 Wrote madness on my withering mien.

It was not unrequited love 35
 That bade my 'wildered spirit rove;
 'Twas not the pride disdaining life,
 That with this mortal world at strife
 Would yield to the soul's inward sense,
 Then groan in human impotence, 40
 And weep because it is not given
 To taste on Earth the peace of Heaven.
 'Twas not that in the narrow sphere
 Where Nature fixed my wayward fate
 There was no friend or kindred dear 45
 Formed to become that spirit's mate,
 Which, searching on tired pinion, found
 Barren and cold repulse around;
 Oh, no! yet each one sorrow gave
 New graces to the narrow grave. 50
 For broken vows had early quelled
 The stainless spirit's vestal flame;
 Yes! whilst the faithful bosom swelled,
 Then the evenenomed arrow came,
 And Apathy's unaltering eye 55
 Beamed coldness on the misery;
 And early I had learned to scorn
 The chains of clay that bound a soul
 Panting to seize the wings of morn,
 And where its vital fires were born 60
 To soar, and spurn the cold control
 Which the vile slaves of earthly night
 Would twine around its struggling
 flight.

Oh, many were the friends whom fame
 Had linked with the unmeaning name,
 Whose magic marked among mankind
 The casket of my unknown mind, 67
 Which hidden from the vulgar glare
 Imbued no fleeting radiance there.
 My darksome spirit sought—it found
 A friendless solitude around. 71

For who that might undaunted stand,
The saviour of a sinking land,
Would crawl, its ruthless tyrant's
slave,

And fatten upon Freedom's grave, 75
Though doomed with her to perish,
where

The captive clasps abhorred despair.

They could not share the bosom's
feeling,

Which, passion's every throb revealing,
Dared force on the world's notice cold
Thoughts of unprofitable mould, 81

Who bask in Custom's fickle ray,
Fit sunshine of such wintry day!

They could not in a twilight walk
Weave an impassioned web of talk, 85

Till mysteries the spirits press
In wild yet tender awfulness,

Then feel within our narrow sphere
How little yet how great we are!

But they might shine in courtly glare,
Attract the rabble's cheapest stare, 91

And might command where'er they
move

A thing that bears the name of love;
They might be learned, witty, gay,

Foremost in fashion's gilt array, 95
On Fame's emblazoned pages shine,
Be princes' friends, but never mine!

Ye jagged peaks that frown sublime,
Mocking the blunted scythe of Time,
Whence I would watch its lustre pale
Steal from the moon o'er yonder vale:

Thou rock, whose bosom black and
vast, 102

Bared to the stream's unceasing flow,
Ever its giant shade doth cast
On the tumultuous surge below: 105

Woods, to whose depths retires to die
The wounded Echo's melody,
And whither this lone spirit bent
The footstep of a wild intent:

Meadows! whose green and spangled
breast 110

These fevered limbs have often pressed,
Until the watchful fiend Despair

Slept in the soothing coolness there!
Have not your varied beauties seen
The sunken eye, the withering mien,
Sad traces of the unuttered pain 116
That froze my heart and burned my
brain.

How changed since Nature's summer
form

Had lost the power my grief to charm,
Since last ye soothed my spirit's sad-
ness, 120

Strange chaos of a mingled madness!
Changed!—not the loathsome worm
that fed

In the dark mansions of the dead,
Now soaring through the fields of air,

And gathering purest nectar there, 125
A butterfly, whose million hues
The dazzled eye of wonder views,

Long lingering on a work so strange,
Has undergone so bright a change.

How do I feel my happiness? 130
I cannot tell, but they may guess
Whose every gloomy feeling gone,

Friendship and passion feel alone;
Who see mortality's dull clouds

Before affection's murmur fly, 135
Whilst the mild glances of her eye
Pierce the thin veil of flesh that shrouds

The spirit's inmost sanctuary.

O thou! whose virtues latest known,
First in this heart yet claim'st a
throne; 140

Whose downy sceptre still shall share
The gentle sway with virtue there;

Thou fair in form, and pure in mind,
Whose ardent friendship rivets fast

The flowery band our fates that bind,
Which incorruptible shall last 146

When duty's hard and cold control
Has thawed around the burning soul,—

The gloomiest retrospects that bind
With crowns of thorn the bleeding

mind, 150
The prospects of most doubtful hue
That rise on Fancy's shuddering

view,—
Are gilt by the reviving ray

Which thou hast flung upon my day.

FRAGMENT OF A SONNET

TO HARRIET

[Published from the Esdaile MS. book by Dowden, *Life of Shelley*, 1887; dated August 1, 1812.]

EVER as now with Love and Virtue's
glow
May thy unwithering soul not cease to
burn,
Still may thine heart with those pure
thoughts o'erflow
Which force from mine such quick and
warm return.

TO HARRIET

[Published, 5-13, by Forman, *P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1876; 58-69, by Shelley, *Notes to Queen Mab*, 1813; and entire (from the Esdaile MS. book) by Dowden, *Life of Shelley*, 1887; dated 1812.]

IT is not blasphemy to hope that
Heaven
More perfectly will give those nameless
joys
Which throb within the pulses of the
blood
And sweeten all that bitterness which
Earth
Infuses in the heaven-born soul. O
thou 5
Whose dear love gleamed upon the
gloomy path
Which this lone spirit travelled, drear
and cold,
Yet swiftly leading to those awful limits
Which mark the bounds of Time and
of the space
When Time shall be no more; wilt thou
not turn 10
Those spirit-beaming eyes and look on
me,
Until I be assured that Earth is Heaven,
And Heaven is Earth?—will not thy
glowing cheek,
Glowing with soft suffusion, rest on
mine,
And breathe magnetic sweetness
through the frame 15
Of my corporeal nature, through the soul

Now knit with these fine fibres? I
would give
The longest and the happiest day that
fate
Has marked on my existence but to feel
One soul-reviving kiss . . . O thou
most dear, 20
'Tis an assurance that this Earth is
Heaven,
And Heaven the flower of that un-
tainted seed
Which springeth here beneath such
love as ours.
Harriet! let death all mortal ties dis-
solve,
But ours shall not be mortal! The
cold hand 25
Of Time may chill the love of earthly
minds
Half frozen now; the frigid inter-
course
Of common souls lives but a summer's
day;
It dies, where it arose, upon this earth.
But ours! oh, 'tis the stretch of Fancy's
hope 30
To portray its continuance as now,
Warm, tranquil, spirit-healing; nor
when age
Has tempered these wild ecstasies, and
given
A soberer tinge to the luxurious glow
Which blazing on devotion's pinnacle
Makes virtuous passion supersede the
power 36
Of reason; nor when life's æstival sun
To deeper manhood shall have ripened
me;
Nor when some years have added judge-
ment's store
To all thy woman sweetness, all the fire
Which throbs in thine enthusiast heart;
not then 41
Shall holy friendship (for what other
name
May love like ours assume?), not even
then
Shall Custom so corrupt, or the cold
forms
Of this desolate world so harden us, 45

As when we think of the dear love that
binds
Our souls in soft communion, while we
know
Each other's thoughts and feelings, can
we say
Unblushingly a heartless compliment,
Praise, hate, or love with the unthink-
ing world, 50
Or dare to cut the unrelaxing nerve
That knits our love to virtue. Can
those eyes,
Beaming with mildest radiance on my
heart
To purify its purity, e'er bend
To soothe its vice or consecrate its
fears? 55
Never, thou second Self! Is confidence
So vain in virtue that I learn to doubt
The mirror even of Truth? Dark flood
of Time,
Roll as it listeth thee; I measure not
By month or moments thy ambiguous
course. 60
Another may stand by me on thy brink,
And watch the bubble whirled beyond
his ken,
Which pauses at my feet. The sense
of love,
The thirst for action, and the im-
passioned thought 64
Prolong my being; if I wake no more,
My life more actual living will contain
Than some gray veteran's of the world's
cold school,
Whose listless hours unprofitably roll
By one enthusiast feeling unredeemed,
Virtue and Love! unbending Fortitude,
Freedom, Devotedness and Purity! 71
That life my Spirit consecrates to you.

SONNET

TO A BALLOON LADEN WITH KNOW-
LEDGE

[Published from the Esdaile MS. book
by Dowden, *Life of Shelley*, 1887; dated
August, 1812.]

BRIGHT ball of flame that through the
gloom of even
Silently takest thine aethereal way,

And with surpassing glory dimm'st
each ray
Twinkling amid the dark blue depths
of Heaven,—
Unlike the fire thou bearest, soon shalt
thou 5
Fade like a meteor in surrounding
gloom,
Whilst that, unquenchable, is doomed
to glow
A watch-light by the patriot's lonely
tomb;
A ray of courage to the oppressed and
poor;
A spark, though gleaming on the
hovel's hearth, 10
Which through the tyrant's gilded
domes shall roar;
A beacon in the darkness of the
Earth;
A sun which, o'er the renovated scene,
Shall dart like Truth where Falsehood
yet has been.

SONNET

ON LAUNCHING SOME BOTTLES FILLED
WITH KNOWLEDGE INTO THE BRISTOL
CHANNEL

[Published from the Esdaile MS. book
by Dowden, *Life of Shelley*, 1887; dated
August, 1812.]

VESSELS of heavenly medicine! may
the breeze
Auspicious waft your dark green
forms to shore;
Safe may ye stem the wide sur-
rounding roar
Of the wild whirlwinds and the raging
seas;
And oh! if Liberty e'er deigned to
stoop 5
From yonder lowly throne her crown-
less brow,
Sure she will breathe around your
emerald group
The fairest breezes of her West that
blow.
Yes! she will waft ye to some freeborn
soul

Whose eye-beam, kindling as it meets
 your freight, ¹⁰
 Her heaven-born flame in suffering
 Earth will light,
 Until its radiance gleams from pole to
 pole,
 And tyrant-hearts with powerless
 envy burst
 To see their night of ignorance dis-
 persed.

THE DEVIL'S WALK

A BALLAD

[Published as a broadside by Shelley,
 1812.]

I

ONCE, early in the morning,
 Beelzebub arose,
 With care his sweet person adorning,
 He put on his Sunday clothes.

II

He drew on a boot to hide his hoof, ⁵
 He drew on a glove to hide his claw,
 His horns were concealed by a *Bras*
Chapeau,
 And the Devil went forth as natty a
Beau
 As Bond-street ever saw.

III

He sate him down, in London town, ¹⁰
 Before earth's morning ray;
 With a favourite imp he began to chat,
 On religion, and scandal, this and that,
 Until the dawn of day.

IV

And then to St. James's Court he
 went, ¹⁵
 And St. Paul's Church he took on
 his way;
 He was mighty thick with every Saint,
 Though they were formal and he
 was gay.

V

The Devil was an agriculturist,
 And as bad weeds quickly grow, ²⁰

In looking over his farm, I wist,
 He wouldn't find cause for woe.

VI

He peeped in each hole, to each cham-
 ber stole,
 His promising live-stock to view;
 Grinning applause, he just showed
 them his claws, ²⁵
 And they shrunk with affright from his
 ugly sight,
 Whose work they delighted to do.

VII

Satan poked his red nose into crannies
 so small
 One would think that the inno-
 cents fair,
 Poor lambkins! were just doing no-
 thing at all ³⁰
 But settling some dress or arranging
 some ball,
 But the Devil saw deeper there.

VIII

A Priest, at whose elbow the Devil
 during prayer
 Sate familiarly, side by side,
 Declared that, if the Tempter were
 there, ³⁵
 His presence he would not abide.
 Ah! ah! thought Old Nick, that's a
 very stale trick,
 For without the Devil, O favourite of
 Evil,
 In your carriage you would not
 ride.

IX

Satan next saw a brainless King, ⁴⁰
 Whose house was as hot as his own;
 Many Imps in attendance were there
 on the wing,
 They flapped the pennon and twisted
 the sting,
 Close by the very Throne.

X

Ah! ah! thought Satan, the pasture is
 good, ⁴⁵
 My Cattle will here thrive better
 than others;

They dine on news of human blood,
They sup on the groans of the dying
and dead,
And supperless never will go to bed;
Which will make them fat as their
brothers. 50

XI

Fat as the Fiends that feed on
blood,
Fresh and warm from the fields of
Spain,
Where Ruin ploughs her gory
way,
Where the shoots of earth are nipped
in the bud,
Where Hell is the Victor's prey, 55
Its glory the meed of the slain.

XII

Fat—as the Death-birds on Erin's
shore,
That glutted themselves in her dearest
gore,
And flitted round Castlereagh,
When they snatched the Patriot's
heart, that *his* grasp 60
Had torn from its widow's maniac
clasp,
And fled at the dawn of day.

XIII

Fat—as the Reptiles of the tomb,
That riot in corruption's spoil,
That fret their little hour in gloom, 65
And creep, and live the while.

XIV

Fat as that Prince's maudlin brain,
Which, added by some gilded toy,
Tired, gives his sweetmeat, and again
Cries for it, like a humoured boy. 70

XV

For he is fat,—his waistcoat gay,
When strained upon a levee day,
Scarce meets across his princely
paunch;
And pantaloons are like half-moons
Upon each brawny haunch. 75

XVI

How vast his stock of calf ! when plenty
Had filled his empty head and heart,
Enough to satiate foplings twenty,
Could make his pantaloons seams
start.

XVII

The Devil (who sometimes is called
Nature), 80
For men of power provides thus
well,
Whilst every change and every feature,
Their great original can tell.

XVIII

Satan saw a lawyer a viper slay, 84
That crawled up the leg of his table,
It reminded him most marvellously
Of the story of Cain and Abel.

XIX

The wealthy yeoman, as he wanders
His fertile fields among,
And on his thriving cattle ponders, 90
Counts his sure gains, and hums a
song;
Thus did the Devil, through earth
walking,
Hum low a hellish song.

XX

For they thrive well whose garb of
gore
Is Satan's choicest livery, 95
And they thrive well who from the poor
Have snatched the bread of penury,
And heap the houseless wanderer's
store
On the rank pile of luxury.

XXI

The Bishops thrive, though they are
big; 100
The Lawyers thrive, though they are
thin;
For every gown, and every wig,
Hides the safe thrift of Hell within.

XXII

Thus pigs were never counted clean,
 Although they dine on finest corn;
 And cormorants are sin-like lean, ¹⁰⁶
 Although they eat from night to
 morn.

XXIII

Oh! why is the Father of Hell in such
 glee,
 As he grins from ear to ear?
 Why does he doff his clothes joyfully,
 As he skips, and prances, and flaps
 his wing, ¹¹¹
 As he sidles, leers, and twirls his
 sting,
 And dares, as he is, to appear?

XXIV

A statesman passed—alone to him,
 The Devil dare his whole shape un-
 cover, ¹¹⁵
 To show each feature, every limb,
 Secure of an unchanging lover.

XXV

At this known sign, a welcome sight,
 The watchful demons sought their
 King,
 And every Fiend of the Stygian night,
 Was in an instant on the wing. ¹²¹

XXVI

Pale Loyalty, his guilt-steeled brow,
 With wreaths of gory laurel crowned:
 The hell-hounds, Murder, Want and
 Woe,
 Forever hungering, flocked around;
 From Spain had Satan sought their
 food, ¹²⁶
 'Twas human woe and human blood!

XXVII

Hark! the earthquake's crash I hear,—
 Kings turn pale, and Conquerors
 start,
 Ruffians tremble in their fear, ¹³⁰
 For their Satan doth depart.

XXVIII

This day Fiends give to revelry
 To celebrate their King's return,

And with delight its Sire to see
 Hell's adamantine limits burn. ¹³⁵

XXIX

But were the Devil's sight as keen
 As Reason's penetrating eye,
 His sulphurous Majesty I ween,
 Would find but little cause for joy.

XXX

For the sons of Reason see ¹⁴⁰
 That, ere fate consume the Pole,
 The false Tyrant's cheek shall be
 Bloodless as his coward soul.

FRAGMENT OF A SONNET

FAREWELL TO NORTH DEVON

[Published (from the Esdaile MS. book)
 by Dowden, *Life of Shelley*, 1887; dated
 August, 1812.]

Where man's profane and tainting
 hand
 Nature's primæval loveliness has
 marred,
 And some few souls of the high bliss
 debarred
 Which else obey her powerful com-
 mand;

... mountain piles ⁵
 That load in grandeur Cambria's
 emerald vales.

ON LEAVING LONDON FOR
WALES

[Published (from the Esdaile MS. book)
 by Dowden, *Life of Shelley*, 1887; dated
 November, 1812.]

HAIL to thee, Cambria! for the un-
 fettered wind
 Which from thy wilds even now
 methinks I feel,
 Chasing the clouds that roll in wrath
 behind,
 And tightening the soul's laxest
 nerves to steel;
 True mountain Liberty alone may
 heal ⁵

The pain which Custom's obdurances
bring,
And he who dares in fancy even to
steal
One draught from Snowdon's ever
sacred spring
Blots out the unholyest rede of worldly
witnessing.

And shall that soul, to selfish peace
resigned,
So soon forget the woe its fellows
share?
Can Snowdon's Lethe from the free-
born mind
So soon the page of injured penury
tear?
Does this fine mass of human
passion dare
To sleep, unhonouring the patriot's
fall,
Or life's sweet load in quietude to bear
While millions famish even in
Luxury's hall,
And Tyranny, high raised, stern lowers
on all?

No, Cambria! never may thy match-
less vales
A heart so false to hope and virtue
shield;
Nor ever may thy spirit-breathing
gales
Waft freshness to the slaves who
dare to yield.
For me! . . . the weapon that I burn
to wield
I seek amid thy rocks to ruin hurled,
That Reason's flag may over Free-
dom's field,
Symbol of bloodless victory, wave
unfurled,
A meteor-sign of love effulgent o'er the
world.

Do thou, wild Cambria, calm each
struggling thought;
Cast thy sweet veil of rocks and
woods between,
That by the soul to indignation
wrought

Mountains and dells be mingled with
the scene;
Let me forever be what I have been,
But not forever at my needy door
Let Misery linger speechless, pale
and lean;
I am the friend of the unfriended
poor,—
Let me not madly stain their righteous
cause in gore.

THE WANDERING JEW'S SOLILOQUY

[Published (from the Esdaile MS. book)
by Bertram Dobell, 1887.]

Is it the Eternal Triune, is it He
Who dares arrest the wheels of destiny
And plunge me in the lowest Hell of
Hells?
Will not the lightning's blast destroy
my frame?
Will not steel drink the blood-life
where it swells?
No—let me hie where dark Destruction
dwells,
To rouse her from her deeply caverned
lair,
And, taunting her cursed sluggishness
to ire,
Light long Oblivion's death-torch at
its flame
And calmy mount Annihilation's pyre.
Tyrant of Earth! pale Misery's jackal
Thou!
Are there no stores of vengeful violent
fate
Within the magazines of Thy fierce
hate?
No poison in the clouds to bathe a
brow
That lowers on Thee with desperate
contempt?
Where is the noonday Pestilence that
slew
The myriad sons of Israel's favoured
nation?
Where the destroying Minister that flew
Pouring the fiery tide of desolation
Upon the leagued Assyrian's attempt?

Where the dark Earthquake-daemon
 who engorged ²¹
 At the dread word Korah's uncon-
 scious crew?
 Or the Angel's two-edged sword of fire
 that urged
 Our primal parents from their bower
 of bliss
 (Reared by Thine hand) for errors not
 their own ²⁵
 By Thine omniscient mind foredoomed,
 foreknown?
 Yes! I would court a ruin such as
 this,
 Almighty Tyrant! and give thanks to
 Thee—
 Drink deeply—drain the cup of hate;
 remit this—I may die.

EVENING

TO HARRIET

[Published by Dowden, *Life of Shelley*,
 1887. Composed July 31, 1813.]

O THOU bright Sun! beneath the dark
 blue line
 Of western distance that sublime
 descendest,
 And, gleaming lovelier as thy beams
 decline,
 Thy million hues to every vapour
 lendest,
 And, over cobweb lawn and grove and
 stream ⁵
 Sheddest the liquid magic of thy light,
 Till calm Earth, with the parting
 splendour bright,
 Shows like the vision of a beauteous
 dream;
 What gazer now with astronomic eye
 Could coldly count the spots within
 thy sphere? ¹⁰
 Such were thy lover, Harriet, could
 he fly
 The thoughts of all that makes his
 passion dear,
 And, turning senseless from thy
 warm caress,
 Pick flaws in our close-woven hap-
 piness.

TO IANTHE

[Published by Dowden, *Life of Shelley*,
 1887. Composed September, 1813.]

I LOVE thee, Baby! for thine own
 sweet sake;
 Those azure eyes, that faintly dim-
 pled cheek,
 Thy tender frame, so eloquently weak,
 Love in the sternest heart of hate
 might wake;
 But more when o'er thy fitful slumber
 bending ⁵
 Thy mother folds thee to her wake-
 ful heart,
 Whilst love and pity, in her glances
 blending,
 All that thy passive eyes can feel
 impart:
 More, when some feeble lineaments of
 her,
 Who bore thy weight beneath her
 spotless bosom, ¹⁰
 As with deep love I read thy face,
 recur,—
 More dear art thou, O fair and fragile
 blossom;
 Dearest when most thy tender traits
 express
 The image of thy mother's loveliness.

SONG FROM
THE WANDERING JEW

[Published as Shelley's by Medwin, *Life of*
Shelley, 1847, i. p. 58.]

SEE yon opening flower
 Spreads its fragrance to the blast;
 It fades within an hour,
 Its decay is pale—is fast.
 Paler is yon maiden; ⁵
 Faster is her heart's decay;
 Deep with sorrow laden,
 She sinks in death away.

FRAGMENT FROM THE
WANDERING JEW

[Published as Shelley's by Medwin, *Life of*
Shelley, 1847, i. p. 56.]

THE Elements respect their Maker's
 seal!
 Still like the scathèd pine tree's height,

Braving the tempests of the night
 Have I 'scaped the flickering flame.
 Like the scathed pine, which a monu-
 ment stands 5
 Of faded grandeur, which the brands
 Of the tempest-shaken air
 Have riven on the desolate heath;
 Yet it stands majestic even in death,
 And rears its wild form there. 10

TO THE QUEEN OF MY HEART

[Published as Shelley's by Medwin, *The Shelley Papers*, 1833, and by Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed.; afterwards suppressed as of doubtful authenticity.]

I

SHALL we roam, my love,
 To the twilight grove,
 When the moon is rising bright;
 Oh, I'll whisper there,
 In the cool night-air, 5
 What I dare not in broad daylight!

II

I'll tell thee a part
 Of the thoughts that start
 To being when thou art nigh;
 And thy beauty, more bright 10
 Than the stars' soft light,
 Shall seem as a weft from the sky.

III

When the pale moonbeam
 On tower and stream
 Sheds a flood of silver sheen, 15
 How I love to gaze
 As the cold ray strays
 O'er thy face, my heart's throned
 queen!

IV

Wilt thou roam with me
 To the restless sea, 20
 And linger upon the steep,
 And list to the flow
 Of the waves below
 How they toss and roar and leap?

V

Those boiling waves, 25
 And the storm that raves
 At night o'er their foaming crest,
 Resemble the strife
 That, from earliest life,
 The passions have waged in my 30
 breast.

VI

Oh, come then, and rove
 To the sea or the grove,
 When the moon is rising bright;
 And I'll whisper there,
 In the cool night-air, 35
 What I dare not in broad daylight.

NOTES

ON THE TEXT AND ITS PUNCTUATION

IN the case of every poem published during Shelley's lifetime, the text of this edition is based upon that of the *editio princeps* or earliest issue. Wherever our text deviates verbally from this exemplar, the word or words of the *editio princeps* will be found recorded in a footnote. In like manner, wherever the text of the poems first printed by Mrs. Shelley in the *Posthumous Poems* of 1824 or the *Poetical Works* of 1839 is modified by MS. authority or otherwise, the reading of the earliest printed text has been subjoined in a footnote. Shelley's punctuation—or what may be presumed to be his—has been retained, save in the case of errors (whether of the transcriber or the printer) overlooked in the revision of the proof-sheets, and of a few places where the pointing, though certainly or seemingly Shelley's, tends to obscure the sense or grammatical construction. In the following notes the more important textual difficulties are briefly discussed, and the readings embodied in the text of this edition, it is hoped, sufficiently justified. An attempt has also been made to record the original punctuation where it is here departed from.

(1) PAGE 1.

THE DAEMON OF THE WORLD:

PART I

The following paragraph, relating to this poem, closes Shelley's *Preface to Alastor*, etc., 1816:—'The Fragment entitled *The Daemon of the World* is a detached part of a poem which the author does not intend for publication. The metre in which it is composed is that of *Samson Agonistes* and the Italian pastoral drama, and may be considered as the natural measure into which poetical conceptions, expressed in harmonious language, necessarily fall.'

(2) PAGE 2.

Lines 56, 112, 184, 288. The editor has added a comma at the end of these lines, and a period (for the comma of 1816) after *by*, l. 279.

(3) PAGE 4.

Lines 167, 168. The *ed. prin.* has a comma after *And*, l. 167, and *heaven*, l. 168.

(1) PAGE 7.

THE DAEMON OF THE WORLD:

PART II

Printed by Mr. Forman from a copy in his possession of *Queen Mab*, corrected by Shelley's hand. See *The Shelley Library*, pp. 36–44, for a detailed history and description of this copy.

(2) PAGE 10.

Lines 436–438. Mr. Forman prints:—
*Which from the exhaustless lore of human
weal
Draws on the virtuous mind, the thoughts
that rise
In time-destroying infiniteness, gift, etc.*

Our text exhibits both variants—*lore* for 'store,' and *Dawns* for 'Draws'—found in Shelley's note on the corresponding passage of *Queen Mab* (viii. 204–206). See editor's note on this passage. Shelley's comma after *infiniteness*, l. 438, is omitted as tending to obscure the construction.

(1) PAGE 14.

ALASTOR; OR THE SPIRIT OF SOLITUDE

Preface. For the concluding paragraph see editor's note (1) on *The Daemon of the World*: Part I.

(2) PAGE 20.

Conducts, O Sleep, to thy, etc. (l. 219.)
The Shelley texts, 1816, 1824, 1839, have *Conduct* here, which Forman and Dowden retain. The suggestion that Shelley may have written 'death's blue vaults' (l. 216) need not, in the face of 'the dark gate of death' (l. 211), be seriously considered; *Conduct* must, therefore, be regarded as a fault in grammar. That Shelley actually wrote *Conduct* is not impossible, for his grammar is not seldom

faulty (see, for instance, *Revolt of Islam*, *Dedication*, l. 60); but it is most improbable that he would have committed a solecism so striking both to eye and ear. Rossetti and Woodberry print *Conducts*, etc. The final *s* is often a vanishing quantity in Shelley's MSS. Or perhaps the compositor's hand was misled by his eye, which may have dropped on the words, *Conduct to thy*, etc., seven lines above.

(3) PAGE 22.

Of wave ruining on wave, etc. (l. 327.)

For *ruining* the text of *P. W.*, 1839, both edd., has *running*—an overlooked misprint, surely, rather than a conjectural emendation. For an example of *ruining* as an intransitive (= 'falling in ruins,' or, simply, 'falling in streams') see *Paradise Lost*, vi. 867-869:—

Hell heard th' insufferable noise, Hell
saw

Heav'n ruining from Heav'n, and would
have fled

Affrighted, etc.

Ruining, in the sense of 'streaming,' 'trailing,' occurs in Coleridge's *Melancholy: a Fragment* (Sibylline Leaves, 1817, p. 262):—

Where ruining ivies propped the ruins
steep—

Melancholy first appeared in *The Morning Post*, Dec. 7, 1797, where, through an error identical with that here assumed in the text of 1839, *running* appears in place of *ruining*—the word intended, and doubtless written, by Coleridge.

(4) PAGE 22.

Line 349. With Mr. Stopford Brooke, the editor substitutes here a colon for the full stop which, in edd. 1816, 1824, and 1839, follows *ocean*. Forman and Dowden retain the full stop; Rossetti and Woodberry substitute a semicolon.

(5) PAGE 26.

*And nought but gnarled roots of ancient
pines*

*Branchless and blasted, clenched with
grasping roots*

The unwilling soil. (ll. 530-532.)

¹ The sentiments connected with and characteristic of this circumstance have no personal reference to the Writer.—[SHELLEY'S NOTE.]

Edd. 1816, 1824, and 1839 have *roots* (l. 530)—a palpable misprint, the probable origin of which may be seen in the line which follows. Rossetti conjectures *trunks*, but *stumps* or *stems* may have been Shelley's word.

(6) PAGE 26.

Lines 543-548. This somewhat involved passage is here reprinted exactly as it stands in the *ed. prin.*, save for the comma after *and*, l. 546, first introduced by Dowden, 1890. The construction and meaning are fully discussed by Forman (*P. W. of Shelley*, ed. 1876, vol. i. pp. 39, 40), Stopford Brooke (*Poems of Shelley*, G.T.S., 1880, p. 323), Dobell (*Alastor, &c., Facsimile Reprint*, 2nd ed. 1887, pp. xxii-xxvii), and Woodberry (*Complete P. W. of Shelley*, 1893, vol. i. p. 413).

(1) PAGE 31.

THE REVOLT OF ISLAM

The revised text (1818) of this poem is given here, as being that which Shelley actually published. In order to reconvert the text of *The Revolt of Islam* into that of *Laon and Cythna*, the reader must make the following alterations in the text. At the end of the *Preface* add:—

'In the personal conduct of my Hero and Heroine, there is one circumstance which was intended to startle the reader from the trance of ordinary life. It was my object to break through the crust of those outworn opinions on which established institutions depend. I have appealed therefore to the most universal of all feelings, and have endeavoured to strengthen the moral sense, by forbidding it to waste its energies in seeking to avoid actions which are only crimes of convention. It is because there is so great a multitude of artificial vices that there are so few real virtues. Those feelings alone which are benevolent or malevolent, are essentially good or bad. The circumstance of which I speak was introduced, however, merely to accustom men to that charity and toleration which the exhibition of a practice widely differing from their own has a tendency to promote¹. Nothing indeed can be more mischievous than many

actions, innocent in themselves, which might bring down upon individuals the bigoted contempt and rage of the multitude.'

P. 58, II. xxi. 1:

I had a little sister whose fair eyes

P. 59, II. xxv. 2:

To love in human life, this sister sweet,

P. 64, III. i. 1:

What thoughts had sway over my sister's slumber

P. 64, III. i. 3:

As if they did ten thousand years outnumber

P. 78, IV. xxx. 6:

And left it vacant—'twas her brother's face—

P. 90, V. xlvii. 5:

I had a brother once, but he is dead!—

P. 100, VI. xxiv. 8:

My own sweet sister looked, with joy did quail,

P. 101, VI. xxxi. 6:

The common blood which ran within our frames,

P. 103, VI. xxxix. 6-9:

*With such close sympathies, for to each other
Had high and solemn hopes, the gentle
might*

*Of earliest love, and all the thoughts which
smother*

*Cold Evil's power, now linked a sister and a
brother.*

P. 103, VI. xl. 1:

And such is Nature's modesty, that those

P. 116, VIII. iv. 9:

*Dream ye that God thus builds for man in
solitude?*

P. 117, VIII. v. 1:

*What then is God? Ye mock yourselves and
give*

P. 117, VIII. vi. 1:

*What then is God? Some moonstruck sophist
stood*

P. 117, VIII. vi. 8, 9:

*And that men say God has appointed Death
On who scorn his will to wreak immortal
wrath.*

P. 117, VIII. vii. 1-4:

*Men say they have seen God, and heard from
God,*

*Or known from others who have known
such things,*

And that his will is all our law, a rod

*To scourge us into slaves—that Priests
and Kings*

P. 117, VIII. viii. 1:

And it is said, that God will punish wrong;

P. 117, VIII. viii. 3, 4:

*And his red hell's undying snakes among
Will bind the wretch on whom he fixed
a stain*

P. 118, VIII. xiii. 3, 4:

*For it is said God rules both high and low,
And man is made the captive of his
brother;*

P. 125, IX. xiii. 8:

To curse the rebels. To their God did they

P. 125, IX. xiv. 6:

By God, and Nature, and Necessity.

Pp. 125-126, IX. xv. The stanza contains ten lines—ll. 4-7 as follows:

*There was one teacher, and must ever be,
They said, even God, who, the necessity
Of rule and wrong had armed against
mankind,*

His slave and his avenger there to be;

P. 126, IX. xviii. 3-6:

*And Hell and Awe, which in the heart of
man*

*Is God itself; the Priests its downfall
knew,*

*As day by day their altars lovelier grew,
Till they were left alone within the fane;*

P. 135, X. xxii. 9:

*On fire! Almighty God his hell on earth has
spread!*

P. 136, X. xxvi. 7, 8:

*Of their Almighty God, the armies wind
In sad procession: each among the train*

P. 136, X. xxviii. 1:

O God Almighty! thou alone hast power.

P. 137, X. xxxi. 1:

And Oromaze, and Christ, and Mahomet,

P. 137, X. xxxii. 1:

*He was a Christian Priest from whom it
came*

P. 137, X. xxxii. 4:

To quell the rebel Atheists; a dire guest

P. 137, X. xxxii. 9:

*To wreak his fear of God in vengeance on
mankind*

P. 138, X. xxxiv. 5, 6:
*His cradled Idol, and the sacrifice
 Of God to God's own wrath—that Islam's
 creed*

P. 138, X. xxxv. 9:
*And thrones, which rest on faith in God,
 nigh overturned.*

P. 139, X. xxxix. 4:
*Of God may be appeased. He ceased, and
 they*

P. 139, X. xl. 5:
*With storms and shadows girt, sate God,
 alone,*

P. 140, X. xlv. 9:
*As 'hush! hark! Come they yet? God, God,
 thine hour is near!'*

P. 140, X. xlv. 8:
Men brought their atheist kindred to appease

P. 141, X. xlvii. 6:
The threshold of God's throne, and it was shel

P. 144, XI. xvi. 1:
Ye turn to God for aid in your distress;

P. 146, XI. xxv. 7:
*Swear by your dreadful God.'—'We swear,
 we swear!'*

P. 149, XII. x. 9:
*Truly for self, thus thought that Christian
 Priest indeed,*

P. 149, XII. xi. 9:
*A woman? God has sent his other victim
 here.*

P. 149, XII. xii. 6-8:
*Will I stand up before God's golden throne,
 And cry, 'O Lord, to thee did I betray
 An Atheist; but for me she would have known*

P. 153, XII. xxix. 4:
In torment and in fire have Atheists gone;

P. 153, XII. xxx. 4:
How Atheists and Republicans can die;

(2) PAGE 38.

*Aught but a lifeless clod, until revived by
 thee (Dedic. vi. 9).*

So Rossetti; the Shelley edd., 1818 and 1839, read *clog*, which is retained by Forman, Dowden, and Woodberry. Rossetti's happy conjecture, *clod*, seems to Forman 'a doubtful emendation, as Shelley may have used *clog* in its [figurative] sense of weight, *encumbrance*.'—Hardly, as here, in a poetical figure: that would be to use

a metaphor within a metaphor. Shelley compares his heart to a concrete object: if *clog* is right, the word must be taken in one or other of its two recognized *literal* senses—'a wooden shoe,' or 'a block of wood tied round the neck or to the leg of a horse or a dog.' Again, it is of others' hearts, not of his own, that Shelley here deplores the icy coldness and weight; besides, how could he appropriately describe his heart as a *weight* or *encumbrance* upon the free play of impulse and emotion, seeing that for Shelley, above all men, the heart was itself the main source and spring of all feeling and action? That source, he complains, has been dried up—its emotions desiccated—by the crushing impact of other hearts, heavy, hard and cold as stone. His heart has become withered and barren, like a lump of earth parched with frost—'a lifeless clod.' Compare *Summer and Winter*, lines 11-15:—

'It was a winter such as when birds die
 In the deep forests; and the fishes lie
 Stiffened in the translucent ice, *which
 makes*

*Even the mud and slime of the warm lakes
 A wrinkled clod as hard as brick;* etc.,
 etc.

The word *revived* suits well with *clod*; but what is a *revived clog*? Finally, the first two lines of the following stanza (vii.) seem decisive in favour of Rossetti's word.

If any one wonders how a misprint overlooked in 1818 could, after twenty-one years, still remain undiscovered in 1839, let him consider the case of *clog* in Lamb's parody on Southey's and Coleridge's *Dactyls* (Lamb, *Letter to Coleridge*, July 1, 1796):—

Sorely your Dactyls do drag along limp-footed;

Sad is the measure that hangs a *clog*
 round 'em so, etc., etc.

Here the misprint, *clod*, which in 1868 appeared in Moxon's edition of the *Letters of Charles Lamb*, has through five successive editions and under many editors—including Fitzgerald, Ainger, and Macdonald—held its ground even to the present day; and this, notwithstanding the preservation of the true reading, *clog*, in the texts of Talfourd and Carew Hazlitt. Here then is the case of a palpable misprint surviving,

despite positive external evidence of its falsity, over a period of thirty-six years.

(3) PAGE 38.

And walked as free, etc. (Ded. vii. 6).

Walked is one of Shelley's occasional grammatical laxities. Forman well observes that *walkedst*, the right word here, would naturally seem to Shelley more heinous than a breach of syntactic rule. Rossetti and, after him, Dowden print *walk*. Forman and Woodberry follow the early texts.

(4) PAGE 42.

I. ix. 1-7. Here the text follows the punctuation of the *ed. prin.*, 1818, with two exceptions: a comma is inserted (1) after *scale* (l. 201), on the authority of the Bodleian MS. (Locock); and (2) after *neck* (l. 205), to indicate the true construction. Mrs. Shelley's text, 1839, has a semicolon after *plumes* (l. 203), which Rossetti adopts. Forman (1892) departs from the pointing of Shelley's edition here, placing a period at the close of line 199, and a dash after *blended* (l. 200).

(5) PAGE 42.

What life, what power, was, etc.

(I. xi. 1.)

The *ed. prin.*, 1818, wants the commas here.

(6) PAGE 45.

... and now

We are embarked—the mountains hang and frown

Over the starry deep that gleams below,

A vast and dim expanse, as o'er the waves we go. (I. xxiii. 6-9.)

With Woodberry I substitute after *embarked* (7) a dash for the comma of the *ed. prin.*; with Rossetti I restore to *below* (8) a comma which I believe to have been overlooked by the printer of that edition. Shelley's meaning I take to be that 'a vast and dim expanse of mountain hangs frowning over the starry deep that gleams below it as we pass over the waves.'

(7) PAGE 46.

As King, and Lord, and God, the conquering Fiend did own,— (I. xxviii. 9.)

So Forman (1892), Dowden; the *ed. prin.*

has a full stop at the close of the line,—where, according to Mr. Locock, no point appears in the Bodl. MS.

(8) PAGE 47.

Black-wingèd demon forms, etc.

(I. xxx. 7.)

The Bodl. MS. exhibits the requisite hyphen here, and in *golden-pinioned* (xxxii. 2).

(9) PAGE 47.

I. xxxi. 2, 6. The 'three-dots' point, employed by Shelley to indicate a pause longer than that of a full stop, is introduced into these two lines on the authority of the Bodl. MS. In both cases it replaces a dash in the *ed. princeps*. See list of punctual variations below. Mr. Locock reports the presence in the MS. of what he justly terms a 'characteristic' comma after *Soon* (xxxii. 2).

(10) PAGE 48.

... mine shook beneath the wide emotion.

(I. xxxviii. 9.)

For *emotion* the Bodl. MS. has *commotion* (Locock)—perhaps the fitter word here.

(11) PAGE 49.

Deep slumber fell on me:—my dreams were fire— (I. xl. 1.)

The dash after *fire* is from the Bodl. MS.,—where, moreover, the somewhat misleading but indubitably Shelleyan comma after *passion* (*ed. prin.*, xl. 4) is wanting (Locock). I have added a dash to the comma after *cover* (xl. 5) in order to clarify the sense.

(12) PAGE 50.

And shared in fearless deeds with evil men, (I. xlv. 4.)

With Forman and Dowden I substitute here a comma for the full stop of the *ed. princeps*. See also list of punctual variations below (stanza xlv).

(13) PAGE 50.

The Spirit whom I loved, in solitude

Sustained his child: (I. xlv. 4, 5.)

The comma here, important as marking the sense as well as the rhythm of the passage, is derived from the Bodl. MS. (Locock).

(14) PAGE 50.

*I looked, and we were sailing pleasantly,
Swift as a cloud between the sea and sky;
Beneath the rising moon seen far away,
Mountains of ice, etc.* (I. xlvii. 4-7.)

The *ed. prin.* has a comma after *sky* (5) and a semicolon after *away* (6)—a pointing followed by Forman, Dowden, and Woodberry. By transposing these points (as in our text), however, a much better sense is obtained; and, luckily, this better sense proves to be that yielded by the Bodl. MS., where, Mr. Locock reports, there is a semicolon after *sky* (5), a comma after *moon* (6), and no point whatsoever after *away* (6).

(15) PAGE 51.

Girt by the deserts of the Universe;
(I. l. 4.)

For the full stop at *Universe* (*ed. prin.*) Woodberry (1893) substituted a semicolon, the point exhibited here by the Bodl. MS.

(16) PAGE 60.

*Hymns which my soul had woven to Freedom, strong
The source of passion, whence they rose,
to be;
Triumphant strains, which, etc.*
(II. xxviii. 6-8.)

The *ed. prin.*, followed by Forman, has *passion whence* (7). Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, both edd., prints: *strong The source of passion, whence they rose to be Triumphant strains, which, etc.*

(17) PAGE 64.

*But, pale, were calm with passion—thus
subdued, etc.* (II. xlix. 6.)

With Rossetti, Dowden, Woodberry, I add a comma after *But* to the pointing of the *ed. prin.* Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, both edd., prints: *But pale, were calm.—With passion thus subdued, etc.*

(18) PAGE 70.

Methought that grate was lifted, etc.
(III. xxv. 1.)

Shelley's and Mrs. Shelley's edd. have *gate*, which is retained by Forman. But

cf. III. xiv. 2, 7. Dowden and Woodberry follow Rossetti in printing *grate*.

(19) PAGE 77.

Where her own standard, etc. (IV. xxiv. 5.)
So Mrs. Shelley, *P. W.*, 1839, both edd.

(20) PAGE 93.

*Beneath whose spires, which swayed in the
red flame,* (V. liv. 6.)

Shelley's and Mrs. Shelley's edd. (1818, 1839) give *red light* here,—an oversight perpetuated by Forman, the rhyme-words *name* (8) and *frame* (9) notwithstanding. With Rossetti, Dowden, Woodberry, I print *red flame*,—an obvious emendation proposed by Fleay.

(21) PAGE 96.

—when the waves smile,
*As sudden earthquakes light many a volcano-
isle,*
*Thus sudden, unexpected feast was spread,
etc.* (VI. vii. 8, 9; viii. 1.)

With Forman, Dowden, Woodberry, I substitute after *isle* (vii. 9) a comma for the full stop of edd. 1818, 1839 (retained by Rossetti). The passage is obscure: perhaps Shelley wrote '*lift many a volcano-isle.*' The plain becomes studded in an instant with piles of corpses, even as the smiling surface of the sea will sometimes become studded in an instant with many islands uplifted by a sudden shock of earthquake.

(22) PAGE 108.

VII. vii. 2-6. The *ed. prin.* punctuates thus:—

and words it gave

*Gestures and looks, such as in whirlwinds
bore
Which might not be withstood, whence none
could save
All who approached their sphere, like some
calm wave
Vexed into whirlpools by the chasms beneath;*

This punctuation is retained by Forman; Rossetti, Dowden, Woodberry, place a comma after *gave* (2) and *Gestures* (3), and—adopting the suggestion of Mr. A. C. Bradley—enclose line 4 (*Which might*

... could save) in parentheses; thus construing *which might not be withstood* and *whence none could save* as adjectival clauses qualifying *whirlwinds* (3), and taking *bore* (3) as a transitive verb governing *All who approached their sphere* (5). This, which I believe to be the true construction, is perhaps indicated quite as clearly by the pointing adopted in the text—a pointing moreover which, on metrical grounds, is, I think, preferable to that proposed by Mr. Bradley. I have added a dash to the comma after *sphere* (5), to indicate that it is *Cythna* herself (and not *All who approached*, etc.) that resembles *some calm wave*, etc.

(23) PAGE 111.

Which dwell in lakes, when the red moon on high

Pause ere it wakens tempest;—

(VII. xxii. 6, 7.)

Here *when the moon Pause* is clearly irregular, but it appears in edd. 1818, 1839, and is undoubtedly Shelley's phrase. Rossetti cites a conjectural emendation by a certain 'C. D. Campbell, Mauritius':—*which the red moon on high Pours ere it wakens tempest*; but cf. *Julian and Mad-dalo*, ll. 53, 54:—

Meanwhile the sun paused ere it should alight,

Over the horizon of the mountains.

—and *Prince Athanase*, ll. 220, 221:—

When the curved moon then lingering in the west

Paused, in yon waves her mighty horns to wet, etc.

(24) PAGE 113.

—*time imparted*

Such power to me—I became fearless-hearted, etc. (VII. xxx. 4, 5.)

With Woodberry I replace with a dash the comma (*ed. prin.*) after *me* (5) retained by Forman, deleted by Rossetti and Dowden. Shelley's (and Forman's) punctuation leaves the construction ambiguous; with Woodberry's the two clauses are seen to be parallel—the latter being appositive to and explanatory of the former; while with Dowden's the clauses are placed in correlation: *time imparted such power to me that I became fearless-hearted*.

(25) PAGE 114.

Of love, in that lorn solitude, etc.

(VII. xxxii. 7.)

All edd. prior to 1876 have *lone solitude*, etc. The important emendation *lorn* was first introduced into the text by Forman, from Shelley's revised copy of *Laon and Cythna*, where *lone* is found to be turned into *lorn* by the poet's own hand.

(26) PAGE 118.

And Hate is throned on high with Fear her mother, etc. (VIII. xiii. 5.)

So the *ed. prin.*; Forman, Dowden, Woodberry, following the text of *Laon and Cythna*, 1818, read, *Fear his mother*. Forman refers to X. xlii. 4, 5, where *Fear* figures as a female, and *Hate* as 'her mate and foe.' But consistency in such matters was not one of Shelley's characteristics, and there seems to be no need for alteration here. Mrs. Shelley (1839) and Rossetti follow the *ed. princeps*.

(27) PAGE 121.

The ship fled fast till the stars 'gan to fail, And, round me gathered, etc.

(VIII. xxvi. 5, 6.)

The *ed. prin.* has no comma after *And* (6). Mrs. Shelley (1839) places a full stop at *fail* (5) and reads, *All round me gathered, etc.*

(28) PAGE 125.

Words which the lore of truth in hues of flame, etc. (IX. xii. 6.)

The *ed. prin.*, followed by Rossetti and Woodberry, has *hues of grace* [cf. note (20) above]; Forman and Dowden read *hues of flame*. For instances of a rhyme-word doing double service, see IX. xxxiv. 6, 9 (*thee . . . thee*); VI. iii. 2, 4 (*arms . . . arms*); X. v. 1, 3 (*came . . . came*).

(29) PAGE 131.

Led them, thus erring, from their native land; (X. v. 6.)

Edd. 1818, 1839 read *home* for *land* here. All modern editors adopt Fleay's *cj.*, *land* [rhyming with *band* (8), *sand* (9)].

(30) PAGE 143.

XI. xi. 7. Rossetti and Dowden, following Mrs. Shelley (1839), print *writhed* here.

(31) PAGE 154.

When the broad sunrise, etc.

(XII. xxxiv. 3.)

When is Rossetti's cj. (accepted by Dowden) for *Where* (1818, 1839), which Forman and Woodberry retain. In XI. xxiv. 1, XII. xv. 2 and XII. xxviii. 7 there is Forman's cj. for *then* (1818).

(32) PAGE 155.

a golden mist did quiver

Where its wild surges with the lake were blended,— (XII. xl. 3, 4.)

Where is Rossetti's cj. (accepted by Forman and Dowden) for *When* (edd. 1818, 1839; Woodberry). See also list of punctual variations below.

(33) PAGE 155.

Our bark hung there, as on a line suspended, etc. (XII. xl. 5.)

Here *on a line* is Rossetti's cj. (accepted by all editors) for *one line* (edd. 1818, 1839). See also list of punctual variations below.

(34) List of Punctual Variations.

Obvious errors of the press excepted, our text reproduces the punctuation of Shelley's edition (1818), save where the sense is likely to be perverted or obscured thereby. The following list shows where the pointing of the text varies from that of the *editio princeps* (1818) which is in every instance recorded here.

DEDICATION, vii. *long*. (9.)

CANTO I. ix. *scale* (3), *neck* (7) xi. *What life what power* (1) xxii. *boat*, (8), *lay*. (9) xxiii. *embarked*, (7), *below A vast* (8, 9) xxvi. *world* (1), *chaos: Lo!* (2) xxviii. *life*: (2), *own*. (9) xxix. *mirrh*. (6) xxx. *language* (2), *But, when* (5) xxxi. *foundations—soon* (2), *war—thrones* (6), *multitude*, (7) xxxii. *flame*, (4) xxxiii. *lightnings* (3), *truth*, (5), *brood*, (5), *hearts*, (8) xxxiv. *Friend* (6) xxxv. *keep* (8) xxxvii. *mountains—* (8) xxxviii. *unfold*, (1), *woe*: (4), *show*, (5) xxxix. *gladness*, (6) xl. *fire*, (1), *cover*, (5), *far* (6) xlii. *kiss*. (9) xliii. *But* (5) xliv. *men*. (4), *fame*; (7) xlv. *loved* (4) xlvii. *sky*, (5), *away*; (6) xlix. *dream*, (2) l. *Universe*. (4), *language* (6) liv. *blind*. (4) lvii. *mine—He* (8) lviii. *said—* (5) lx. *tongue*, (9).

CANTO II. i. *which* (4) iii. *Yet flattering power had* (7) iv. *lust*, (6) vi. *kind*, (2) xi. *Nor*, (2) xiii. *ruin*. (3), *trust*. (9) xviii. *friend* (3) xxii. *thought*, (6), *fancies* (7) xxiv. *radiancy*, (3) xxv. *dells*, (8) xxvi. *waste*, (4) xxviii. *passion* (7) xxxi. *yet* (4) xxxii. *which* (3) xxxiii. *blight* (8), *who* (8) xxxvii. *seat*; (7) xxxix. *not—wherefore* (1) xl. *good*, (5) xli. *tears* (7) xliii. *air* (2) xlvi. *fire*, (3) xlvii. *stroke*, (2) xlix. *But* (6).

CANTO III. i. *dream*, (4) iii. *shown* (7), *That* (9) iv. *when*, (3) v. *ever* (7) vii. *And* (1) xvi. *Below* (6) xix. *if* (4) xxv. *thither*, (2) xxvi. *worm* (2), *there*, (3) xxvii. *beautiful*, (8) xxviii. *And* (1) xxx. *As* (1).

CANTO IV. ii. *fallen—We* (6) iii. *ray*, (7) iv. *sleep*, (5) viii. *fed* (6) x. *wide*; (1), *sword* (7) xvi. *chance*, (7) xix. *her* (3), *blending* (8) xxiii. *tyranny*, (4) xxiv. *unwillingly* (1) xxvi. *blood*; (2) xxvii. *around* (2), *as* (4) xxxi. *or* (4) xxxiii. *was* (5).

CANTO V. i. *flow*, (5) ii. *profound—Oh*, (4), *veiled*, (6) iii. *victory* (1), *face—* (8) iv. *swim*, (5) vi. *spread*, (2), *outsprung* (5), *far*, (6), *war*, (8) viii. *avail* (5) x. *weep*; (4), *tents* (8) xi. *lives*, (8) xiii. *beside* (1) xv. *sky*, (3) xvii. *love* (4) xx. *Which* (9) xxii. *gloom*, (8) xxiii. *King* (6) xxvii. *known*, (4) xxxiii. *ye?* (1), *Othman—* (3) xxxiv. *pure—* (7) xxxv. *people* (1) xxxvi. *where* (3) xxxviii. *quail*; (2) xxxix. *society*, (8) xl. *see* (1) xliii. *light* (8), *throne*. (9) l. *skies*, (6) li. *Image* (7), *isles*; *all* (9), *amaze*. *When* (9, 10), *fair*. (12) li. 1: *will* (15), *train* (15) li. 2: *wert*, (5) li. 4: *brethren* (1) li. 5: *steaming*, (6) lv. *creep*. (9).

CANTO VI. i. *snapped* (9) ii. *gate*, (2) v. *rout* (4), *voice*, (6), *looks*, (6) vi. *as* (1) vii. *prey*, (1), *isle*. (9) viii. *sight* (2) xii. *glen* (4) xiv. *almost* (1), *dismounting* (4) xv. *blood* (2) xxi. *reins—We* (3), *word* (3) xxii. *crest* (6) xxv. *And*, (1), *and* (9) xxviii. *but* (3), *there*, (8) xxx. *air*. (9) xxxii. *voice—* (1) xxxvii. *frames*; (5) xliii. *mane*, (2), *again*, (7) xlviii. *Now* (8) li. *hut*, (4) liv. *waste*, (7).

CANTO VII. ii. *was*, (5) vi. *dreams* (3) vii. *gave Gestures and* (2, 3), *withstood*, (4), *save* (4), *sphere*, (5) viii. *sent*, (2) xiv. *taught*, (6), *sought*, (8) xvii. *and* (6) xviii. *own* (5), *beloved—* (5) xix. *tears*; (2), *which*, (3), *appears*, (5) xxv. *me*, (1), *shapes* (5) xxvii. *And* (1) xxviii. *strength* (1) xxx.

Aye, (3), *me*, (5) xxxiii. *pure* (9) xxxviii. *wracked*; (4), *cataract*, (5).

CANTO VIII. ii. *and* (2) ix. *shadow* (5) xi. *freedom* (7), *blood*. (9) xiii. *Woman*, (8), *bond-slave*, (8) xiv. *pursuing* (8), *wretch*! (9) xv. *home*, (3) xxi. *Hate*, (1) xxiii. *reply*, (1) xxv. *fairest*, (1) xxvi. *And* (6) xxviii. *thunder* (2).

CANTO IX. iv. *hills*, (1), *brood*, (6) v. *port* —*alas*! (1) viii. *grave* (2) ix. *with friend* (3), *occupations* (7), *overnumber*, (8) xii. *lair*; (5), *Words*, (6) xv. *who*, (4), *armed*, (5), *misery*. (9) xvii. *call*, (4) xx. *truth* (9) xxii. *sharest*; (4) xxiii. *Faith*, (8) xxviii. *conceive* (8) xxx. *and as* (5), *hope* (8) xxxiii. *thoughts*:—*Come* (7) xxxiv. *willingly* (2) xxxv. *ceased*, (8) xxxvi. *undight*; (4).

CANTO X. ii. *tongue*, (1) vii. *conspirators* (6), *wolves*, (8) viii. *smiles*, (5) ix. *bands*, (2) xi. *file did* (5) xviii. *but* (5) xix. *brought*, (5) xxiv. *food* (5) xxix. *worshippers* (3) xxxii. *west* (2) xxxvi. *foes*, (5) xxxviii. *now!* (2) xl. *alone*, (5) xli. *morn* —*at* (1) xlii. *below*, (2) xliii. *deep*, (7), *pest* (8) xlv. *drear* (8) xlvii. *'Kill me!'* *they* (9) xlviii. *died*, (8).

CANTO XI. iv. *which*, (6), *eyes*, (8) v. *tenderness* (7) vii. *return*—*the* (8) viii. *midnight*—(1) x. *multitude* (1) xi. *cheeks* (1), *here* (4) xii. *come, give* (3) xiii. *many* (1) xiv. *arrest*, (4), *terror*, (6) xix. *thus* (1) xx. *Stranger* *'What:'* (5) xxiii. *People*: (7).

CANTO XII. iii. *and like* (7) vii. *away* (7) viii. *Fairer it seems than* (7) x. *self*, (9) xi. *divine* (2), *beauty*—(3) xii. *own*. (9) xiv. *fear*, (1), *choose*, (4) xvii. *death?* *the* (1) xix. *radiance* (3) xxii. *spake*; (5) xxv. *thee beloved*;—(8) xxvi. *towers* (6) xxviii. *repent*, (2) xxix. *withdrawn*, (2) xxxi. *stood a winged Thought* (1) xxxii. *gossamer*, (6) xxxiii. *stream* (1) xxxiv. *sunrise*, (3), *gold*, (3), *quiver*, (4) xxxv. *abode*, (4) xxxvii. *wonderful*; (3), *go*, (4) xl. *blended*: (4), *heavens*, (6), *lake*; (6).

PRINCE ATHANASE

(1) PAGE 159.

Lines 28–30. The punctuation here (*P. W.*, 1839) is supported by the Bodleian MS., which has a full stop at *relief* (l. 28), and a comma at *chief* (l. 30). The text of the *Posth. Poems*, 1824, has a semicolon at *relief* and a full stop at *chief*. The original

draft of ll. 29, 30, in the Bodleian MS., runs:—

*He was the child of fortune and of power,
And, though of a high race the orphan
Chief, etc.*

—which is decisive in favour of our punctuation (1839). See Locock, *Examination*, etc., p. 51.

(2) PAGE 160.

Which wake and feed an everliving woe,—
(l. 74.)

All the edd. have *on* for *an*, the reading of the Bodl. MS., where it appears as a substitute for *his*, the word originally written. The first draft of the line runs: *Which nursed and fed his everliving woe*. *Wake*, accordingly, is to be construed as a transitive (Locock).

(3) PAGES 162, 163.

Lines 130–169. This entire passage is distinctly cancelled in the Bodl. MS., where the following revised version of ll. 125–129 and 168–181 is found some way later on:—

*Prince Athanase had one beloved friend,
An old, old man, with hair of silver white,
And lips where heavenly smiles would hang
and blend
With his wise words; and eyes whose arrowy
light*

*Was the reflex of many minds; he filled
From fountains pure, nigh overgrown and
[lost],*

*The spirit of Prince Athanase, a child;
And soul-sustaining songs of ancient lore
And philosophic wisdom, clear and mild.
And sweet and subtle talk they evermore
The pupil and the master [share], until
Sharing that undiminishable store,
The youth, as clouds athwart a grassy hill
Oustrun the winds that chase them, soon out-
ran*

*His teacher, and did teach with native skill
Strange truths and new to that experienced
man;*

*So [?] they were friends, as few have ever
been*

*Who mark the extremes of life's discordant
span.*

The words bracketed above, and in *Fragment v.* of our text, are cancelled in the MS. (Locock).

(4) PAGE 162.

And blighting hope, etc. (l. 152.)

The word *blighting* here, noted as unsuitable by Rossetti, is cancelled in the Bodl. MS. (Locock).

(5) PAGE 162.

She saw between the chestnuts, far beneath, etc. (l. 154.)

The reading of edd. 1824, 1839 (*beneath the chestnuts*) is a palpable misprint.

(6) PAGE 163.

*And sweet and subile talk they evermore,
The pupil and the master, shared;*
(ll. 173, 174.)

So ed. 1824, which is supported by the Bodl. MS.,—both the cancelled draft and the revised version: cf. note (3) above. *P. W.*, 1839, has *now* for *they*—a reading retained by Rossetti alone of modern editors.

(7) PAGE 163.

Line 193. The 'three-dots' point at *storm* is in the Bodl. MS.

(8) PAGES 163, 164.

Lines 202–207. The Bodl. MS., which has a comma and dash after *nightingale*, bears out James Thomson's ('B.V.'s') view, approved by Rossetti, that these lines form one sentence. The MS. has a dash after *here* (l. 207), which must be regarded as 'equivalent to a full stop or note of exclamation' (Locock). Edd. 1824, 1839 have a note of exclamation after *nightingale* (l. 204) and a comma after *here* (l. 207).

(9) PAGE 164.

Fragment iii (ll. 230–239). First printed from the Bodl. MS. by Mr. C. D. Locock. In the space here left blank, l. 231, the MS. has *manhood*, which is cancelled for some monosyllable unknown—query, *spring*?

(10) PAGE 165.

And sea-buds burst under the waves serene:— (l. 250.)

For *under* ed. 1839 has *beneath*, which, however, is cancelled for *under* in the Bodl. MS. (Locock).

(11) PAGE 165.

Lines 251–254. This, with many other places from l. 222 onwards, evidently lacks Shelley's final corrections.

(12) PAGE 165.

Line 259. According to Mr. Locock, the final text of this line in the Bodl. MS. runs:—
Exulting, while the wide world shrinks below, etc.

(13) PAGE 165.

Fragment v (ll. 261–278). The text here is much tortured in the Bodl. MS. What the editions give us is clearly but a rough and tentative draft. 'The language contains no third rhyme to *mountains* (l. 262) and *fountains* (l. 264).' Locock. Lines 270–278 were first printed by Mr. Locock.

(14) PAGE 166.

Line 289. For *light* (Bodl. MS.) here the edd. read *bright*. But *light* is undoubtedly the right word: cf. l. 287. *Investeth* (l. 285), Rossetti's cj. for *Investeth* (1824, 1839) is found in the Bodl. MS.

(15) PAGE 166.

Lines 297–302 (*the darts . . . ungarmented*). First printed by Mr. Locock from the Bodl. MS.

(16) PAGE 166.

Another Fragment (A). Lines 1–3 of this *Fragment* reappear in a modified shape in the Bodl. MS. of *Prometheus Unbound*, II. iv. 28–30:—

Or looks which tell that while the lips are calm

*And the eyes cold, the spirit weeps within
Tears like the sanguine sweat of agony;*

Here the lines are cancelled—only, however, to reappear in a heightened shape in *The Cenci*, I. i. 111–113:—

The dry, fixed eyeball; the pale quivering lip,

Which tells me that the spirit weeps within

Tears bitterer than the bloody sweat of Christ. (Garnett, Locock.)

(17) PAGES 158–166.

PUNCTUAL VARIATIONS.

The punctuation of *Prince Athanase* is that of *P. W.*, 1839, save in the places

specified in the notes above, and in l. 60—where there is a full stop, instead of the comma demanded by the sense, at the close of the line.

ROSALIND AND HELEN

(1) PAGE 168.

A sound from there, etc. (l. 63.)

Rossetti's cj., *there for thee*, is adopted by all modern editors.

(2) PAGE 173.

And down my cheeks the quick tears fell,
etc. (l. 366.)

The word *fell* is Rossetti's cj. (to rhyme with *tell*, l. 369) for *ran* (1819, 1839).

(3) PAGE 174.

Lines 405-409. The syntax here does not hang together, and Shelley may have been thinking of this passage amongst others when, on Sept. 6, 1819, he wrote to Ollier:—'In the *Rosalind and Helen* I see there are some few errors, which are so much the worse because they are errors in the sense.' The obscurity, however, may have been, in part at least, designed: Rosalind grows incoherent before breaking off abruptly. No satisfactory emendation has been proposed.

(4) PAGE 176.

Where weary meteor lamps repose, etc.
(l. 551.)

With Woodberry I regard *Where*, his cj. for *When* (1819, 1839), as necessary for the sense.

(5) PAGE 179.

With which they drag from mines of
gore, etc. (l. 711.)

Rossetti proposes *yore* for *gore* here, or, as an alternative, *rivers of gore*, etc. If *yore* be right, Shelley's meaning is: 'With which *from of old* they drag,' etc. But cf. Note (3) above.

(6) PAGE 182.

Where, like twin vultures, etc. (l. 932.)

Where is Woodberry's reading for *When* (1819, 1839). Forman suggests *Where* but does not print it.

(7) PAGE 185.

Lines 1093-1096. The *editio princeps* (1819) punctuates:—

*Hung in dense flocks beneath the dome,
That ivory dome, whose azure night
With golden stars, like heaven, was bright
O'er the split cedar's pointed flame;*

(8) PAGE 186.

Lines 1168-1170. *Sunk* (l. 1170) must be taken as a transitive in this passage, the grammar of which is defended by Mr. Swinburne.

(9) PAGE 186.

*Whilst animal life many long years
Had rescue from a chasm of tears;*
(ll. 1208-1209.)

Forman substitutes *rescue* for *rescued* (1819, 1839)—a highly probable cj. adopted by Dowden, but rejected by Woodberry. The sense is: 'Whilst my life, surviving by the physical functions merely, thus escaped during many years from hopeless weeping.'

(10) PAGES 167-188.

PUNCTUAL VARIATIONS.

The following is a list of punctual variations, giving in each case the pointing of the *editio princeps* (1819):—heart 257; weak 425; Aye 492; immortally 864; not, 894; bleeding, 933; Fidelity 1055; dome, 1093; bright 1095; tremble, 1150; life-dissolving 1166; words, 1176; omit parentheses ll. 1188-1189; bereft, 1230.

JULIAN AND MADDALO

(1) PAGE 193.

Line 158. *Salutations past*; (1824); *Salutations passed*; (1839). Our text follows Woodberry.

(2) PAGE 193.

—*we might be all*
We dream of happy, high, majestic.
(ll. 172-173.)

So the Hunt MS., ed. 1824, has a comma after *of* (l. 173), which is retained by Rossetti and Dowden.

(3) PAGE 195.

—*his melody*
Is interrupted—now we hear the din, etc.
(ll. 265-266.)

So the Hunt MS.; *his melody Is interrupted now: we hear the din*, etc., 1824, 1829.

(4) PAGE 196.

Lines 282-284. The *ed. prin.* (1824) runs:—

*Smiled in their motions as they lay apart,
As one who wrought from his own fervid heart*

*The eloquence of passion: soon he raised,
etc.*

(5) PAGE 199.

Line 414. The *ed. prin.* (1824) has a colon at the end of this line, and a semi-colon at the close of l. 415.

(6) PAGES 196-203.

The 'three-dots' point, which appears several times in these pages, is taken from the Hunt MS. and serves to mark a pause longer than that of a full stop.

(7) PAGE 201.

*He ceased, and overcome leant back
awhile, etc.* (l. 511.)

The form *leant* is retained here, as the stem-vowel, though unaltered in spelling, is shortened in pronunciation. Thus *leant* (pronounced '*lent*') from *lean* comes under the same category as *crept* from *creep*, *lept* from *leap*, *cleft* from *cleave*, etc.—perfectly normal forms, all of them. In the case of weak preterites formed without any vowel-change, the more regular formation with *ed* is that which has been adopted in this volume. See Editor's Preface.

(8) PAGE 203.

Cancelled Fragments of Julian and Maddalo. These were first printed by Dr. Garnett, *Relics of Shelley*, 1862.

(9) PAGES 190-203.

PUNCTUAL VARIATIONS.

Shelley's final transcript of *Julian and Maddalo*, though written with great care and neatness, is yet very imperfectly punctuated. He would seem to have relied on the vigilance of Leigh Hunt—or, failing Hunt, of Peacock—to make good all omissions while seeing the poem through the press. Even Mr. Buxton Forman, careful as he is to uphold MS.

authority in general, finds it necessary to supplement the pointing of the Hunt MS. in no fewer than ninety-four places. The following table gives a list of the pointings adopted in our text, over and above those found in the Hunt MS. In all but four or five instances, the supplementary points are derived from Mrs. Shelley's text of 1824.

1. *Comma added at end of line*: 40, 54, 60, 77, 78, 85, 90, 94, 107, 110, 116, 120, 123, 134, 144, 145, 154, 157, 168, 179, 183, 191, 196, 202, 203, 215, 217, 221, 224, 225, 238, 253, 254, 262, 287, 305, 307, 331, 338, 360, 375, 384, 385, 396, 432, 436, 447, 450, 451, 473, 475, 476, 511, 520, 526, 541, 582, 590, 591, 592, 593, 595, 603, 612.

2. *Comma added elsewhere*: seas, 58; vineyards, 58; dismounted, 61; evening, 65; companion, 86; isles, 90; meant, 94; Look, Julian, 96; maniacs, 110; maker, 113; past, 114; churches, 136; rainy, 141; blithe, 167; beauty, 174; Maddalo, 192; others, 205; this, 232; respects, 241; shriek, 267; wrote, 286; month, 300; cried, 300; O, 304; and, 306; misery, disappointment, 314; soon, 369; stay, 392; mad, 394; Nay, 398; serpent, 399; said, 403; cruel, 439; hate, 461; hearts, 483; he, 529; seemed, 529; Unseen, 554; morning, 582; aspect, 585; And, 593; remember, 604; parted, 610.

3. *Semicolon added at end of line*: 101, 103, 167, 181, 279, 496. 4. *Colon added at end of line*: 164, 178, 606, 610. 5. *Full stop added at end of line*: 95, 201, 299, 319, 407, 481, 599, 601, 617. 6. *Full stop added elsewhere*: transparent. 85; trials. 472; Venice. 583. 7. *Admiration-note added at end of line*: 392, 492; elsewhere: 310, 323. 8. *Dash added at end of line*: 158, 379. 9. *Full stop for comma (MS.)*: eye. 119. 10. *Full stop for dash (MS.)*: entered. 158. 11. *Colon for full stop (MS.)*: tale: 596. 12. *Dash for colon (MS.)*: this— 207; prepared— 379. 13. *Comma and dash for semicolon (MS.)*: expressionless,— 292. 14. *Comma and dash for comma (MS.)*: not,— 127.

PROMETHEUS UNBOUND

The variants of B. (Shelley's 'intermediate draft' of *Prometheus Unbound*, now in the Bodleian Library), here recorded, are taken from Mr. C. D. Locock's

Examination, etc., Clarendon Press, 1903.
See Editor's Prefatory Note, p. 204, above.

(1) PAGE 212.

Act I, line 204. B. has—*shaken* in pencil above—*peopled*.

(2) PAGE 220.

Hark that outcry, etc. (I. 553.)

All edd. read *Mark that outcry*, etc. As Shelley nowhere else uses *Mark* in the sense of *List*, I have adopted *Hark*, the reading of B.

(3) PAGE 225.

Gleamed in the night. I wandered, etc. (I. 770.)

Forman proposes to delete the period at *night*.

(4) PAGE 225.

But treads with lulling footstep, etc. (I. 774.)

Forman prints *killing*—a misreading of B. Edd. 1820, 1839 read *silent*.

(5) PAGE 226.

...*the eastern star looks white*, etc. (I. 825.)
B. reads *wan* for *white*.

(6) PAGE 229.

Like footsteps of weak melody, etc. (II. i. 89.)

B. reads *far* (above a cancelled *lost*) for *weak*.

(7) PAGE 233.

*And wakes the destined soft emotion,—
Attracts, impels them;* (II. ii. 50, 51.)

The *ed. prin.* (1820) reads *destined soft emotion, Attracts*, etc.; *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed. reads *destined: soft emotion Attracts*, etc.; *P. W.*, 1839, 2nd ed. reads *destined, soft emotion Attracts*, etc. Forman and Dowden place a period, and Woodberry a semicolon, at *destined* (l. 50).

(8) PAGE 233.

There steams a plume-uplifting wind, etc. (II. ii. 53.)

Here *steams* is found in B., in the *ed. prin.* (1820) and in the 1st ed. of *P. W.*, 1839. In the 2nd ed., 1839, *streams* appears—no doubt a misprint overlooked by the editress.

(9) PAGE 233.

Sucked up and hurrying: as they fleet,
etc. (II. ii. 60.)

So *P. W.*, 1839, both edd. The *ed. prin.* (1820) reads *hurrying as*, etc.

(10) PAGE 235.

See'st thou shapes within the mist?
(II. iii. 50.)

So B., where these words are substituted for the cancelled *I see thin shapes within the mist* of the *ed. prin.* (1820). 'The credit of discovering the true reading belongs to Zupitza' (Locock).

(11) PAGE 236.

II. iv. 12–18. The construction is faulty here, but the sense, as Professor Woodberry observes, is clear.

(12) PAGE 238.

...*but who rains down*, etc. (II. iv. 100.)

The *ed. prin.* (1820) has *reigns*—a reading which Forman bravely but unsuccessfully attempts to defend.

(13) PAGE 241.

Child of Light! thy limbs are burning, etc. (II. v. 54.)

The *ed. prin.* (1820) has *lips* for *limbs*, but the word *membre* in Shelley's Italian prose version of these lines establishes *limbs*, the reading of B. (Locock).

(14) PAGE 242.

*Which in the winds and on the waves doth
move,* (II. v. 96.)

The word *and* is Rossetti's conjectural emendation, adopted by Forman and Dowden. Woodberry unhappily observes that 'the emendation corrects a faultless line merely to make it agree with stanzaic structure, and . . . is open to the gravest doubt.' Rossetti's conjecture is fully established by the authority of B.

(15) PAGE 253.

III. iv. 172–174. The *ed. prin.* (1820) punctuates:

mouldering round
*These imaged to the pride of kings and
priests,*
A dark yet mighty faith, a power, etc.

This punctuation is retained by Forman and Dowden; that of our text is Woodberry's.

(16) PAGE 253.

III. iv. 180, 188. A dash has been introduced at the close of these two lines to indicate the construction more clearly. And for the sake of clearness a note of interrogation has been substituted for the semicolon of 1820 after *Passionless* (line 198).

(17) PAGE 257.

Where lovers catch ye by your loose tresses;
(IV. 107.)

B. has *sliding* for *loose* (cancelled).

(18) PAGE 259.

By ebbing light into her western cave,
(IV. 208.)

Here *light* is the reading of B. for *night* (all edd.). Mr. Locock tells us that the anticipated discovery of this reading was the origin of his examination of the Shelley MSS. at the Bodleian. In printing *night* Marchant's compositor blundered; yet 'we cannot wish the fault undone, the issue of it being so proper.'

(19) PAGE 260.

Purple and azure, white, and green, and golden,
(IV. 242.)

The *ed. prin.* (1820) reads *white, green and golden*, etc.—*while and green* being Rossetti's emendation, adopted by Forman and Dowden. Here again—cf. note (17) above—Prof. Woodberry commits himself by stigmatizing the correction as one 'for which there is no authority in Shelley's habitual versification.' Rossetti's conjecture is confirmed by the reading of B., *white and green*, etc.

(20) PAGE 260.

Filling the abyss with sun-like lightnings,
(IV. 276.)

The *ed. prin.* (1820) reads *lightnings*, for which Rossetti substitutes *lightenings*—a conjecture described by Forman as 'an example of how a very slight change may produce a very calamitous result.' B. however supports Rossetti, and in point of fact Shelley usually wrote *lightenings*, even where the word counts as a dissyllable (Locock).

(21) PAGE 267.

Meteors and mists, which throng air's solitudes:—
(IV. 547.)

For *throng* (cancelled) B. reads *feed*, i.e., 'feed on' (cf. *Pasturing flowers of vegetable fire*, III. iv. 110)—a reading which carries on the metaphor of line 546 (*ye untameable herds*), and ought, perhaps, to be adopted into the text.

(22) PAGES 207–269.

PUNCTUAL VARIATIONS.

The punctuation of our text is that of the *editio princeps* (1820), except in the places indicated in the following list, which records in each instance the pointing of 1820:—

Act I.—empire. 15; O, 17; God 144; words 185; internally. 299; O, 302; gnash 345; wail 345; Sufferer 352; agony. 491; Between 712; cloud 712; vale 826.

Act II, Scene i.—air 129; by 153; fire, 155. *Scene ii.*—noonday, 25; hurrying 60. *Scene iii.*—mist. 50. *Scene iv.*—sun, 4; Ungazed 5; on 103; ay 106; secrets. 115. *Scene v.*—brightness 67.

Act III, Scene iii.—apparitions, 49; beauty, 51; phantoms, (*omit parentheses*) 52; reality, 53; wind 98. *Scene iv.*—toil 109; fire. 110; feel; 114; borne; 115; said 124; priests, 173; man, 180; hate, 188; *Passionless*; 198.

Act IV.—dreams, 66; air, 187; dreams, 209; woods 211; thunder-storm, 215; lie 298; bones 342; blending. 343; mire. 349; pass, 371; kind 385; move. 387.

THE CENCI

(1) PAGE 279.

The deed he saw could not have rated higher

Than his most worthless life:—

(I. i. 24, 25.)

Than is Mrs. Shelley's emendation (1839) for *That*, the word in the *editio princeps* (1819) printed in Italy, and in the (standard) edition of 1821. The sense is: 'The crime he witnessed could not have proved costlier to redeem than his murder has proved to me.'

(2) PAGE 281.

And but that there yet remains a deed to act, etc.
(I. i. 100.)

Read: *And bút | that there yét | remains |*
etc.

(3) PAGE 281.

I. i. 111-113. The earliest draft of these lines appears as a tentative fragment in the Bodleian MS. of *Prince Athanase* (*vid. supr.*, p. 166). In the Bodleian MS. of *Prometheus Unbound* they reappear (after II. iv. 27) in a modified shape, as follows:—

*Or looks which tell that while the lips are
calm*

*And the eyes cold, the spirit weeps within
Tears like the sanguine sweat of agony;*

Here again, however, the passage is cancelled, once more to reappear in its final and most effective shape in *The Cenci* (Lo-cock).

(4) PAGE 283.

*And thus I love you still, but holily,
Even as a sister or a spirit might;*

(I. ii. 24, 25.)

For this, the reading of the standard edition (1821), the *ed. prin.* has, *And yet I love*, etc., which Rossetti retains. If yet be right, the line should be punctuated:—

*And yet I love you still,—but holily,
Even as a sister or a spirit might;*

(5) PAGE 287.

*What, if we,
The desolate and the dead, were his own
flesh,
His children and his wife, etc.*

(I. iii. 103-105.)

For *were* (104) Rossetti *cj. are or wear*. *Wear* is a plausible emendation, but the text as it stands is defensible.

(6) PAGE 306.

*But that no power can fill with vital oil
That broken lamp of flesh.*

(III. ii. 17, 18.)

The standard text (1821) has a Shelleyan comma after *oil* (17), which Forman retains. Woodberry adds a dash to the comma, thus making that (17) a demonstrative pronoun indicating *broken lamp of flesh*. The pointing of our text is that of edd. 1819, 1839. *But that* (17) is to be taken as a prepositional conjunction linking the dependent clause, *no power . . . lamp of flesh*, to the principal sentence, *So wastes . . . kindled mine* (15, 16).

(7) PAGES 279-334.

The following list of punctual variations indicates the places where our pointing departs from that of the standard text of 1821, and records in each instance the pointing of that edition:—

Act I, Scene ii.—Ah! No, 34; *Scene iii.*—hope, 29; Why 44; love 115; thou 146; Ay 146.

Act II, Scene i.—Ah! No, 13; Ah! No, 73; courage 80; nook 179; *Scene ii.*—fire, 70; courage 152.

Act III, Scene i.—Why 64; mock 185; opinion 185; law 185; strange 188; friend 222; *Scene ii.*—so 3; oil, 17.

Act IV, Scene i.—wrong 41; looked 97; child 107; *Scene iii.*—What 19; father, (*omit quotes*) 32.

Act V, Scene ii.—years 119; *Scene iii.*—Ay, 5; Guards 94; *Scene iv.*—child, 145.

THE MASK OF ANARCHY

Our text follows in the main the transcript by Mrs. Shelley (with additions and corrections in Shelley's hand) known as the 'Hunt MS.' For the readings of this MS. we are indebted to Mr. Buxton Forman's Library Edition of the Poems, 1876. The variants of the 'Wise MS.' (see Prefatory Note, p. 338) are derived from the Facsimile edited in 1887 for the Shelley Society by Mr. Buxton Forman.

(1) PAGE 338.

Like Eldon, an ermined gown; (iv. 2.)

The *editio princeps* (1832) has *Like Lord E*— here. *Lord* is inserted in minute characters in the Wise MS., but is rejected from our text as having been cancelled by the poet himself in the (later) Hunt MS.

(2) PAGE 339.

*For he knew the Palaces
Of our Kings were rightly his;*

(xx. 1, 2.)

For *rightly* (Wise MS.) the Hunt MS. and edd. 1832, 1839 have *nightly* which is retained by Rossetti and in Forman's text of 1876. Dowden and Woodberry print *rightly* which also appears in Forman's latest text (*Aldine Shelley*, 1892).

(3) PAGE 342.

In a neat and happy home. (liv. 4.)

For *In* (Wise MS., edd. 1832, 1839) the Hunt MS. reads *To a neat*, etc., which is adopted by Rossetti and Dowden, and appeared in Forman's text of 1876. Woodberry and Forman (1892) print *In a neat*, etc.

(4) PAGE 343.

Stanzas lxx. 3, 4; lxxi. 1. These form one continuous clause in every text save the *editio princeps*, 1832, where a semicolon appears after *around* (lxx. 4).

(5) PAGES 338-344.

Our punctuation follows that of the Hunt MS., save in the following places, where a comma, wanting in the MS., is supplied in the text:—gay 47; came 58; waken 122; shaken 123; call 124; number 152; dwell 163; thou 209; thee 249; fashion 287; surprise 345; free 358. A semicolon is supplied after *earth* (line 131).

PETER BELL THE THIRD

Thomas Brown, Esq., the Younger, H. F., to whom the *Dedication* is addressed, is the Irish poet, Tom Moore. The letters *H. F.* may stand for 'Historian of the Fudges' (Garnett), *Hibernicae Filius* (Rossetti), or, perhaps, *Hibernicae Fidicen*. Castles and Oliver (III. ii. 1; VII. iv. 4) were government spies, as readers of Charles Lamb are aware. The allusion in VI. xxxvi. is to Wordsworth's *Thanksgiving Ode on The Battle of Waterloo*, original version, published in 1816:—

But Thy most dreaded instrument,
In working out a pure intent,
Is Man—arrayed for mutual slaughter,
—Yea, Carnage is Thy daughter!

(1) PAGE 358.

Lines 547-549 (VI. xviii. 5; xix. 1, 2). These lines evidently form a continuous clause. The full stop of the *ed. prin.* at *rocks*, l. 547, has therefore been deleted, and a semicolon substituted for the original comma at the close of l. 546.

(2) PAGE 359.

'Ay—and at last desert me too.' (l. 603.)

Oddly enough, no one seems to have noticed that these words are spoken—not by Peter to his soul, but—by his soul to Peter, by way of rejoinder to the challenge of lines 600-602:—'*And I and you, My dearest Soul, will then make merry, As the Prince Regent did with Sherry.*' In order to indicate this fact, inverted commas are inserted at the close of line 602 and the beginning of l. 603.

(3) PAGES 347-362.

The punctuation of the *editio princeps*, 1839, has been throughout revised, but—with the two exceptions specified in notes (1) and (2) above—it seemed an unprofitable labour to record the particular alterations, which serve but to clarify—in no instance to modify—the sense as indicated by Mrs. Shelley's punctuation.

LETTER TO MARIA GISBORNE

Our text mainly follows Mrs. Shelley's transcript, for the readings of which we are indebted to Mr. Buxton Forman's Library Edition of the Poems, 1876. The variants from Shelley's draft are supplied by Dr. Garnett.

(1) PAGE 367.

Lines 197-201. These lines, which are wanting in edd. 1824 and 1839 (1st ed.), are supplied from Mrs. Shelley's transcript and from Shelley's draft (Bos. MS.). In the 2nd edition of 1839 the following lines appear in their place:—

Your old friend Godwin, greater none
than he;
Though fallen on evil times, yet will he
stand,
Among the spirits of our age and land,
Before the dread tribunal of To-come
The foremost, whilst rebuke stands pale
and dumb.

(2) PAGE 370.

Line 296. The names in this line are supplied from the two MSS. In the *Posthumous Poems* of 1824 the line appears:—*Oh! that H—— and —— were there, etc.*

(3) PAGES 364-369.

The following list gives the places where the pointing of the text varies from that of Mrs. Shelley's transcript as reported by Mr. Buxton Forman, and records in each case the pointing of that original:—Turk 26; scorn 40; understood, 49; boat—75; think, 86; believe; 158; are; 164; fair 233; cameleopard; 240; Now 291.

THE WITCH OF ATLAS

(1) PAGES 371-387.

The following list gives the places where our text departs from the pointing of the *editio princeps* (*Dedication*, 1839; *Witch of Atlas*, 1824), and records in each case the original pointing:—DEDIC.—pinions, 14; fellow, 41; Othello, 45. WITCH OF ATLAS.—bliss; 164; above. 192; gums 258; flashed 409; sunlight, 409; Thamondocana 424; by. 432; engraven. 448; apart, 662; mind! 662.

EPIPSYCHIDION

(1) PAGES 413-424.

The following list gives the places where our text departs from the pointing of the *editio princeps*, 1821, with the original point in each case:—love, 44; pleasure; 68; flowing 96; where! 234; passed 252; dreamed, 278; Night 418; year, 440; children, 528.

ADONAIS

(1) PAGES 432-444.

The following list indicates the places in which the punctuation of this edition departs from that of the *ed. prin.* of 1821, and records in each instance the pointing of that text:—thou 10; Oh 19; apace, 65; Oh 73; flown 138; Thou 142; Ah 154; immersed 167; corpse 172; tender 172; his 193; they 213; Death 217; Might 218; bow, 249; sighs 314; escape 320; Cease 366; dark 406; forth 415; dead, 440; Whilst 493.

HELLAS

A Reprint of the original edition (1822) of *Hellas* was edited for the Shelley Society in 1887 by Mr. Thomas J. Wise. In Shelley's list of *Dramatis Personae* the

Phantom of Mahomet the Second is wanting. Shelley's list of *Errata* in ed. 1822 was first printed in Mr. Buxton Forman's Library Edition of the Poems, 1876 (iv. p. 572). These *errata* are silently corrected in the text.

(1) PAGE 469.

For Revenge and Wrong bring forth their kind, etc. (ll. 728-729.)

"For" has no rhyme (unless "are" and "despair" are to be considered such): it requires to rhyme with "hear." From this defect of rhyme, and other considerations, I (following Mr. Fleay) used to consider it almost certain that "Fear" ought to replace "For"; and I gave "Fear" in my edition of 1870. . . . However, the word in the MS. ["Williams transcript"] is "For," and Shelley's list of errata leaves this unaltered—so we must needs abide by it.—Rossetti, *Complete P. W. of P. B. S.*, ed. 1878 (3 vols.), ii. p. 456.

(2) PAGE 469.

Lines 729-732. This quatrain, as Dr. Garnett (*Letters of Shelley*, 1884, pp. 166, 249) points out, is an expansion of the following lines from the *Agamemnon* of Aeschylus (758-760), quoted by Shelley in a letter to his wife, dated 'Friday, August 10, 1821':—

το δυσσεβες—
μετα μὲν πλείονα τίκτει,
σφετέρῃ δ' εἰκότα γέννῃ.

(3) PAGE 478.

Lines 1091-1093. This passage, from the words *more bright* to the close of l. 1093, is wanting in the *editio princeps*, 1822, its place being supplied by asterisks. The lacuna in the text is due, no doubt, to the timidity of Ollier, the publisher, whom Shelley had authorised to make excisions from the notes. In *P. W.*, 1839, the lines, as they appear in our text, are restored; in Galignani's edition of *Coleridge, Shelley, and Keats* (Paris, 1829), however, they had already appeared, though with the substitution of *wise* for *bright* (l. 1091), and of *unwithstood* for *unsubdued* (l. 1093). Galignani's reading—*native* for *votive*—in l. 1095 is an evident misprint. In Ascham's edition of Shelley (2 vols., fcp. 8vo., 1834), the passage is reprinted from Galignani.

(4) PAGES 452-478.

The following list shows the places in which our text departs from the punctuation of the *editio princeps*, 1822, and records in each instance the pointing of that edition:—dreams 71; course. 125; mockery 150; conqueror 212; streams 235; Moslems 275; West 305; moon, 347; harm, 394; shame, 402; anger 408; descends 447; crime 454; banner. 461; Phanae, 470; blood 551; tyrant 557; Cydaris, 606; Heaven 636; Highness 638; man 738; sayest 738; One 768; mountains 831; dust 885; consummation? 902; dream 921; may 923; death 935; clime. 1005; feast, 1025; horn, 1032; Noon, 1045; death 1057; dowers 1094.

CHARLES THE FIRST

To Mr. Rossetti we owe the reconstruction of this fragmentary drama out of materials partly published by Mrs. Shelley in 1824, partly recovered from MS. by himself. The bracketed words are, presumably, supplied by Mr. Rossetti to fill actual *lacunae* in the MS.; those queried represent indistinct writing. Mr. Rossetti's additions to the text are indicated in the footnotes. In one or two instances Mr. Forman and Dr. Garnett have restored the true reading. The list of *Dramatis Personae* is Mr. Forman's.

THE TRIUMPH OF LIFE

(1) PAGE 510.

Lines 131-135. This grammatically incoherent passage is thus conjecturally emended by Rossetti:—

*Fled back like eagles to their native noon;
For those who put aside the diadem
Of earthly thrones or gems . . . ,
Whether of Athens or Jerusalem,
Were neither mid the mighty captives seen,
etc.*

In the case of an incomplete poem lacking the author's final corrections, however, restoration by conjecture is, to say the least of it, gratuitous.

(2) PAGE 514.

Line 282. The words, '*Even as the deeds of others, not as theirs.*' And then—are

wanting in edd. 1824, 1839, and were recovered by Dr. Garnett from the Boscombe MS. Mrs. Shelley's note here runs:— 'There is a chasm here in the MS. which it is impossible to fill. It appears from the context that other shapes pass and that Rousseau still stood beside the dreamer.' Mr. Forman thinks that the 'chasm' is filled up by the words restored from the MS. by Dr. Garnett. 'If there is really still a chasm,' he writes (1876), 'it is very remarkable that line 282 on one side of it should rhyme with lines 276, 278 and 280 on the other.'

MISCELLANEOUS POEMS

(1) PAGE 523.

To ——. Mrs. Shelley tentatively assigned this sonnet to 1817. 'It seems not improbable that it was addressed at this time [June, 1814] to Mary Godwin.' Dowden, *Life*, i. 422. Woodberry suggests that 'Harriet answers as well, or better, to the situation described.'

(2) PAGE 523.

On Death. These stanzas occur in the Esdaile MS. along with others which Shelley intended to print with *Queen Mab* in 1813; but the text was revised before publication in 1816.

(3) PAGE 525.

To ——. 'The poem beginning "Oh, there are spirits in the air," was addressed in idea to Coleridge, whom he never knew' — writes Mrs. Shelley. Mr. Bertram Dobell, Mr. Rossetti and Professor Dowden, however, incline to think that we have here an address by Shelley in a despondent mood to his own spirit.

(4) PAGE 527.

Lines. These appear to be antedated by a year, as they evidently allude to the death of Harriet Shelley in November, 1816.

(5) PAGE 541.

Another Fragment to Music. To Mr. Forman we owe the restoration of the true text here—'food of Love.' Mrs. Shelley printed 'god of Love.'

(6) PAGE 567.

Marenghi, ll. 92, 93. The 1870 (Rossetti) version of these lines is:—

*White bones, and locks of dun and yellow
hair,
And ringèd horns which buffaloes did
wear—*

The words *locks of dun* (l. 92) are cancelled in the MS. Shelley's failure to cancel the whole line was due, Mr. Locock rightly argues, to inadvertence merely; instead of *buffaloes* the MS. gives *the buffalo*, and it supplies the 'wonderful line' (Locock) which closes the stanza in our text, and with which Mr. Locock aptly compares *Mont Blanc*, l. 69:—

*Save when the eagle brings some hunter's
bone,
And the wolf tracks her there.*

(7) PAGE 603.

Ode to Liberty, ll. 1, 2. On the suggestion of his brother, Mr. Alfred Forman, the editor of the Library Edition of Shelley's Poems (1876), Mr. Buxton Forman, printed these lines as follows:—

*A glorious people vibrated again:
The lightning of the nations, Liberty,
From heart to heart, etc.*

The testimony of Shelley's autograph in the Harvard College MS., however, is final against such a punctuation.

(8) PAGE 604.

Lines 41, 42. We follow Mrs. Shelley's punctuation (1839). In Shelley's edition (1820) there is no stop at the end of l. 41, and a semicolon closes l. 42.

(9) PAGE 616.

Ode to Naples. In Mrs. Shelley's editions the various sections of this Ode are severally headed as follows:—'*Epode I a, Epode II a, Strophe a 1, Strophe β 2, Antistrophe a, Antistrophe β 2, Antistrophe αγ, Antistrophe βγ, Epode I β, Epode II β*'. In the MS., Mr. Locock tells us, the headings are 'very doubtful, many of them being vaguely altered with pen and pencil.' Shelley evidently hesitated between two or three alternative ways of indicating the structure and corresponding parts of his elaborate song; hence the chaotic jumble

of headings printed in edd. 1824, 1839. So far as the *Epodes* are concerned, the headings in this edition are those of edd. 1824, 1839, which may be taken as supported by the MS. (Locock). As to the remaining sections, Mr. Locock's examination of the MS. leads him to conclude that Shelley's final choice was:—'*Strophe 1, Strophe 2, Antistrophe 1, Antistrophe 2, Antistrophe 1a, Antistrophe 2a*.' This in itself would be perfectly appropriate, but it would be inconsistent with the method employed in designating the *Epodes*. I have therefore adopted in preference a scheme which, if it lacks MS. authority in some particulars, has at least the merit of being absolutely logical and consistent throughout.

Mr. Locock has some interesting remarks on the metrical features of this complex ode. On the 10th line of *Antistrophe I a* (l. 86 of the ode)—*Aghast she pass from the Earth's disk*—which exceeds by one foot the 10th lines of the two corresponding divisions, *Strophe I* and *Antistrophe I β*, he observes happily enough that '*Aghast* may well have been intended to disappear.' Mr. Locock does not seem to notice that the closing lines of these three answering sections—(1) *Hail, hail, all hail!*—(2) *Thou shalt be great—All hail!*—(3) *Art Thou of all these hopes.—O hail!* increase by regular lengths—two, three, four iambs. Nor does he seem quite to grasp Shelley's intention with regard to the rhyme scheme of the other triple group, *Strophe II, Antistrophe II a, Antistrophe II β*. That of *Strophe II* may be thus expressed:—*a-a-bc; d-d-bc; a-c-d; b-c*. Between this and *Antistrophe II a* (the second member of the group) there is a general correspondence with, in one particular, a subtle modification. The scheme now becomes: *a-a-bc; d-d-bc; a-c-b; d-c*: i.e. the rhymes of lines 9 and 10 are transposed—*God* (l. 9) answering to the halfway rhymes of ll. 3 and 6, *gawd* and *unawed*, instead of (as in *Strophe II*) to the rhyme-endings of ll. 4 and 5; and, *vice versa*, *fate* (l. 10) answering to *desolate* and *state* (ll. 4 and 5), instead of to the halfway rhymes aforesaid. As to *Antistrophe II β*, that follows *Antistrophe II a*, so far as it goes; but after l. 9 it breaks off suddenly, and closes with two lines corresponding in

length and rhyme to the closing couplet of *Antistrophe I* β, the section immediately preceding, which, however, belongs not to this group, but to the other. Mr. Locock speaks of l. 124 as 'a rhymeless line.' Rhymeless it is not, for *shore*, its rhyme-termination, answers to *bower* and *power*, the halfway rhymes of ll. 118 and 121 respectively. Why Mr. Locock should call line 12 an 'unmetrical line,' I cannot see. It is a decasyllabic line, with a trochee substituted for an iambus in the third foot—*Around | me gledmed | many a | bright sé | pulchre*.

(10) PAGE 623.

The Tower of Famine.—It is doubtful whether the following note is Shelley's or Mrs. Shelley's: 'At Pisa there still exists the prison of Ugolino, which goes by the name of "La Torre della Fame"; in the adjoining building the galley-slaves are confined. It is situated on the Ponte al Marc on the Arno.'

(11) PAGE 652.

Ginevra, l. 129: *Through seas and winds, cities and wildernesses*. The footnote omits Professor Dowden's conjectural emendation—*woods*—for *winds*, the reading of ed. 1824 here.

(12) PAGE 660.

The Lady of the South. Our text adopts Mr. Forman's correction—*drouth* for *drought*—in l. 3. This should have been recorded in a footnote.

(13) PAGE 695.

Hymn to Mercury, l. 609. The period at *now* is supported by the Harvard MS.

JUVENILIA

QUEEN MAB

(1) PAGE 776.

*Throughout this varied and eternal world
Soul is the only element: the block
That for uncounted ages has remained
The moveless pillar of a mountain's
weight
Is active, living spirit.*

(IV, ll. 139-143.)

This punctuation was proposed in 1888 by Mr. J. R. Tutin (see *Notebook of the*

Shelley Society, Part I, p. 21), and adopted by Dowden, *Poetical Works of Shelley*, Macmillan, 1890. The *editio princeps* (1813), which is followed by Forman (1892) and Woodberry (1893), has a comma after *element* and a full stop at *remained*.

(2) PAGE 777.

*Guards . . . from a nation's rage
Secure the crown, etc.*

(IV, ll. 173-176.)

So Mrs. Shelley (*P. W.*, 1839, both edd.), Rossetti, Forman, Dowden. The *ed. prin.* reads *Secures*, which Woodberry defends and retains.

(3) PAGES 777-778.

IV, ll. 203-220: omitted by Mrs. Shelley from the text of *P. W.*, 1839, 1st ed., but restored in the 2nd ed. of 1839. See p. 835 above, *Note on QUEEN MAB*, by Mrs. Shelley.

(4) PAGE 779.

*All germs of promise, yet when the tall
trees, etc.* (V, l. 9.)

So Rossetti, Dowden, Woodberry. In edd. 1813 (*ed. prin.*) and 1839 (*P. W.*, both edd.) there is a full stop at *promise* which Forman retains.

(5) PAGE 781.

*Who ever hears his famished offspring's
scream, etc.* (V, l. 116.)

The *ed. prin.* has *offsprings*—an evident misprint.

(6) PAGES 784-792.

VI, l. 54-VII, l. 275: struck out of the text of *P. W.*, 1839 (1st ed.), but restored in the 2nd edition of that year. See Note (3) above.

(7) PAGE 787.

The exterminable spirit it contains, etc. (VII, l. 23.)

Exterminable seems to be used here in the sense of 'illimitable' (N. E. D.). Rossetti proposes *interminable*, or *inexterminable*.

(8) PAGE 790.

A smile of godlike malice reillumed, etc. (VII, l. 180.)

The *ed. prin.* and the first edition of *P. W.*, 1839, read *reilluminated* here, which

is retained by Forman, Dowden, Woodberry. With Rossetti, I follow Mrs. Shelley's reading in *P. W.*, 1839 (2nd ed.).

(9) PAGE 795.

*One curse alone was spared—the name of
God.* (VIII, l. 165.)

Removed from the text, *P. W.*, 1839 (1st ed.); restored, *P. W.*, 1839 (2nd ed.). See Notes (3) and (6) above.

(10) PAGE 795.

*Which from the exhaustless lore of human
weal*

Dawns on the virtuous mind, etc.

(VIII, ll. 204–205.)

With some hesitation as to *lore*, I reprint these lines as they are given by Shelley himself in the note on this passage (*supra*, p. 825). The text of 1813 runs:—

*Which from the exhaustless store of human
weal*

Draws on the virtuous mind, etc.

This is retained by Woodberry, while Rossetti, Forman, and Dowden adopt eclectic texts, Forman and Dowden reading *lore* and *Draws*, while Rossetti, again, reads *store* and *Dawns*. Our text is supported by the authority of Dr. Richard Garnett. The comma after *infiniteness* (l. 206) has a metrical, not a logical, value.

(11) PAGE 797.

*Nor searing Reason with the brand of
God.* (IX, l. 48.)

Removed from the text, *P. W.*, 1839 (1st ed.), by Mrs. Shelley, who failed, doubtless through an oversight, to restore it in the second edition. See Notes (3), (6), and (9) above.

(12) PAGE 797.

*Where neither avarice, cunning, pride,
nor care, etc.* (IX, l. 67.)

The *ed. prin.* reads *pride, or care*, which is retained by Forman and Woodberry. With Rossetti and Dowden, I follow Mrs. Shelley's text, *P. W.*, 1839 (both edd.).

NOTES TO QUEEN MAB

(1) PAGE 819.

*The mine, big with destructive power,
burst under me, etc.* (Note on VII. 67.)

This is the reading of the *Poetical Works* of 1839 (2nd ed.). The *editio princeps* (1813) reads *burst upon me*. Doubtless *under* was intended by Shelley: the occurrence, thrice over, of *upon* in the ten lines preceding would account for the unconscious substitution of the word here, either by the printer, or perhaps by Shelley himself in his transcript for the press.

(2) PAGE 825.

... *it cannot arise from reasoning, etc.*
(Note on VII. 135.)

The *editio princeps* (1813) has *conviction* for *reasoning* here—an obvious error of the press, overlooked by Mrs. Shelley in 1839, and perpetuated in his several editions of the poems by Mr. H. Buxton Forman. *Reasoning*, Mr. W. M. Rossetti's conjectural emendation, is manifestly the right word here, and has been adopted by Dowden and Woodberry.

(3) PAGE 825.

Him, still from hope to hope, etc.

(Note on VIII. 203–207.)

See editor's note (10) on *Queen Mab* above.

(1) PAGE 839.

A Dialogue.—The titles of this poem, of the stanzas *On an Icicle, etc.*, and of the lines *To Death*, were first given by Professor Dowden (*P. W. of P. B. S.*, 1890) from the Esdaile MS. book. The textual corrections from the same quarter (see footnotes *passim*) are also owing to Professor Dowden.

(2) PAGE 843.

Original Poetry by Victor and Cazire.—Dr. Garnett, who in 1898 edited for Mr. John Lane a reprint of these long-lost verses, identifies *Victor's* coadjutrix, *Cazire*, with Elizabeth Shelley, the poet's sister. 'The two initial pieces are the only two which can be attributed to Elizabeth Shelley with absolute certainty, though others in the volume may possibly belong to her' (Garnett).

(3) PAGE 850.

Saint Edmond's Eve. This ballad-tale was "conveyed" in its entirety by *Cazire* from Matthew Gregory Lewis's *Tales of*

Terror, 1801, where it appears under the title of *The Black Canon of Elmham; or, Saint Edmond's Eve*. Stockdale, the publisher of *Victor and Cazire*, detected the imposition, and communicated his discovery to Shelley—when 'with all the ardour natural to his character he [Shelley] expressed the warmest resentment at the imposition practised upon him by his coadjutor, and entreated me to destroy all the copies, of which about one hundred had been put into circulation.'

(4) PAGE 870.

To Mary who Died in this Opinion.—From a letter addressed by Shelley to Miss Hitchener, dated November 23, 1811.

(5) PAGE 871.

A Tale of Society.—The titles of this and the following piece were first given by Professor Dowden from the Esdaile MS., from which also one or two corrections in the text of both poems, made in Macmillan's edition of 1890, were derived.

A LIST OF THE PRINCIPAL EDITIONS OF SHELLEY'S POETICAL WORKS,

SHOWING THE VARIOUS PRINTED SOURCES OF THE
CONTENTS OF THIS EDITION

I.

(1) *Original Poetry*: | *By Victor and Cazire*. | Call it not vain:—they do not err, | Who say, that, when the poet dies, | Mute Nature mourns her worshipper. | *Lay of the Last Minstrel*. | Worthing | Printed by C. and W. Phillips, | for the Authors; | And sold by J. J. Stockdale, 41, Pall-Mall, | And all other Booksellers. | 1810.

(2) *Original Poetry* | *By Victor & Cazire* | [Percy Bysshe Shelley | & Elizabeth Shelley] | *Edited by* | Richard Garnett | C.B., LL.D. | *Published by* | John Lane, at the Sign | of the Bodley Head in | London and New York | MDCCCXCVIII.

II.

Posthumous Fragments | of | *Margaret Nicholson*: | Being Poems Found Amongst the Papers of that | Noted Female who attempted the Life | of the King in 1786. | Edited by | John Fitz-Victor. | Oxford: | Printed and sold by J. Munday | 1810.

III.

St. Irvyne; | or, | *The Rosierucian*. | A Romance. | By | A Gentleman | of the University of Oxford. | London: | Printed for J. J. Stockdale, | 41, Pall Mall. | 1811.

IV.

The Devil's Walk; a *Ballad*. Printed as a broadside, 1812.

V.

Queen Mab; | a | *Philosophical Poem*: | with Notes. | By | Percy Bysshe Shelley. | *Ecrasez l'Infame!* | *Correspondance de Voltaire*. | *Avia Pieridum peragro loca, nullius ante Trita solo; iuvat integros accedere fonteis; | Atque haurire: iuratque (sic) novos decerpere flores. | Unde prius nulli velarint tempora musae. | Primum quod magnis doceo de rebus; et arctis | Religionum animos nodis exsolvere pergo.* | *Lucret.* lib. iv. | *Δος που στῶ, καὶ κοσμον κινῶ.* | *Archimedes*. | London: | Printed by P. B. Shelley, | 23, Chapel Street, Grosvenor Square. | 1813.

VI.

Alastor; | or, | *The Spirit of Solitude*: | and Other Poems. | By | Percy Bysshe Shelley | London | Printed for Baldwin, Cradock, and Joy, Pater- | noster Row; and Carpenter and Son, | Old Bond Street: | By S. Hamilton, Weybridge, Surrey | 1816.

VII.

(1) *Laon and Cythna*; | or, | *The Revolution* | of | *the Golden City*: | A Vision of the Nineteenth Century. | In the Stanza of Spenser. | By | Percy B. Shelley. | *Δος που στῶ καὶ κοσμον κινῶ.* | *Archimedes*. | London: | Printed for Sherwood, Neely, & Jones, Paternoster- | Row; and C. and J. Ollier, Welbeck-Street: | By B. M'Millan, Bow-Street, Covent-Garden. | 1818.

(2) *The Revolt of Islam*; | A Poem, | in Twelve Cantos. | By | Percy Bysshe Shelley. | London: | Printed for C. and J. Ollier, Welbeck-Street; | By B. M'Millan, Bow-Street, Covent-Garden. | 1818.

(3) A few copies of *The Revolt of Islam* bear date 1817 instead of 1818.

(4) 'The same sheets were used again in 1829 with a third title-page similar to the foregoing [2], but with the imprint "London: | Printed for John Brooks, | 421 Oxford-Street. 1829."' (H. Buxton Forman, C.B.: *The Shelley Library*, p. 73.)

(5) 'Copies of the 1829 issue of *The Revolt of Islam* not infrequently occur with *Laon and Cythna* text.' (*The Shelley Library*, p. 73.)

VIII.

Rosalind and Helen, | A Modern Eclogue; | With Other Poems: | By | Percy Bysshe Shelley. | London: | Printed for C. and J. Ollier, | Vere Street, Bond Street. | 1819.

IX.

(1) *The Cenci*. | A Tragedy, | In Five Acts. | By Percy B. Shelley. | Italy. | Printed for C. and J. Ollier, | Vere Street, Bond Street. | London. | 1819.

(2) *The Cenci* | A Tragedy | In Five Acts | By | Percy Bysshe Shelley | Second Edition | London | C. and J. Ollier Vere Street Bond Street | 1821.

X.

Prometheus Unbound | A Lyrical Drama | In Four Acts | With Other Poems | By | Percy Bysshe Shelley | Audisne haec, Amphiaræ, sub terram abdite? | London | C. and J. Ollier Vere Street Bond Street | 1820.

XI.

Oedipus Tyrannus; | or, | *Swellfoot The Tyrant*. | A Tragedy. | In Two Acts. | Translated from the Original Doric. | —Choose Reform or civil-war, | When thro' thy streets, instead of hare with dogs, | A CONSORT-QUEEN shall hunt a KING with hogs, | Riding on the IONIAN MINOTAUR. | London: | Published for the Author, | By J. Johnston, 98, Cheapside, and sold by | all booksellers. | 1820.

XII.

Epipsychidion | Verses Addressed to the Noble | And Unfortunate Lady | Emilia V—— | Now Imprisoned in the Convent of — | L' anima amante si slancia fuori del creato, e si crea nel infinito | un Mondo tutto per essa, diverso assai da questo oscuro e pauroso | baratro. Her Own Words. | London | C. and J. Ollier Vere Street Bond Street | MDCCCXXI.

XIII.

(1) *Adonais* | An Elegy on the Death of John Keats, | Author of Endymion, Hyperion etc. | By | Percy B. Shelley | Ἀσθήρ πρὶν μὲν ἑλαμπες ἐν ζῳοῖσιν εἰῶς. | Νῦν δὲ θανὼν, λαμπεῖς ἔσπερος ἐν φθίμενοις. | Plato. | Pisa | With the Types of Didot | MDCCCXXI.

(2) *Adonais*. | An Elegy | on the | Death of John Keats, | Author of Endymion, Hyperion, etc. | By | Percy B. Shelley. | [Motto as in (1)] Cambridge: | Printed by W. Metcalfe, | and sold by Messrs. Gee & Bridges, Market-Hill. | MDCCCXXIX.

XIV.

Hellas | A Lyrical Drama | By | Percy B. Shelley | ΜΑΝΤΙΣ ΕΙΜ' ΕΞΘΛΩΝ' ΑΙΩΝΩΝ | Oedip. Colon. | London | Charles and James Ollier Vere Street | Bond Street | MDCCCXXII. (The last work issued in Shelley's lifetime.)

XV.

Posthumous Poems | of | Percy Bysshe Shelley. | In nobil sangue vita umile e queta, | Ed in alto intelletto un puro core; | Frutto senile in sul giovanil fiore, | E in aspetto pensoso anima lieta. | Petrarca. | London, 1824: | Printed for John and Henry L. Hunt, | Tavistock Street, Covent Garden. (Edited by Mrs. Shelley.)

XVI.

The | Masque of Anarchy. | A Poem. | By Percy Bysshe Shelley. Now first published, with a Preface | by Leigh Hunt. | Hope is Strong; | Justice and Truth their winged child have found. | Revolt of Islam. | London: | Edward Moxon, 64, New Bond Street. | 1832.

XVII.

The Shelley Papers | Memoir | of | Percy Bysshe Shelley | By T. Medwin, Esq. | And | Original Poems and Papers | By Percy Bysshe Shelley. | Now first collected. | London: | Whittaker, Treacher, & Co. | 1833.

(The Poems occupy pp. 109-126.)

XVIII.

The | Poetical Works | of | Percy Bysshe Shelley. | Edited | by Mrs. Shelley. | Lui non trov' io, ma suoi santi vestigi | Tutti rivolti alla superna strada | Veggio, lunge da' laghi averni e stigi.—Petrarca. | In Four Volumes. | Vol. I. [II. III. IV.] | London: | Edward Moxon, Dover Street. | MDCCCXXXIX.

XIX.

(1) *The | Poetical Works | of | Percy Bysshe Shelley: |* [Vignette of Shelley's Tomb.] London. | Edward Moxon, Dover Street. | 1839.

(This is the engraved title-page. The printed title-page runs:—)

(2) *The | Poetical Works | of | Percy Bysshe Shelley. |* Edited | By Mrs. Shelley. | [Motto from Petrarch as in XVIII.] | London: | Edward Moxon, Dover Street. | M.DCCC.XL.

(Large octavo, printed in double columns. The *Dedication* is dated 11th November, 1839.)

XX.

Essays, | Letters from Abroad, | Translations and Fragments, | By | Percy Bysshe Shelley. | Edited | By Mrs. Shelley. | [Long prose motto translated from Schiller] | In Two Volumes. | Vol. I. [II.] | London: | Edward Moxon, Dover Street. | MDCCCXL.

XXI.

Relics of Shelley. | Edited by | Richard Garnett. | [Lines 20-24 of *To Jane*: 'The keen stars,' &c.] | London: | Edward Moxon & Co., Dover Street. | 1862.

XXII.

The | Poetical Works | of | Percy Bysshe Shelley: | Including Various Additional Pieces | From MS. and Other Sources. | The Text carefully revised, with Notes and | A Memoir, | By William Michael Rossetti. | Vol. I [II.] | [Moxon's Device.] | London: | E. Moxon, Son, & Co., 44 Dover Street, W. | 1870.

XXIII.

The Daemon of the World | By | Percy Bysshe Shelley | The First Part | as published in 1816 with *Alastor* | The Second Part | Deciphered and now First Printed from his own Manuscript | Revision and Interpolations in the Newly Discovered | Copy of *Queen Mab* | London | Privately printed by H. Buxton Forman | 38 Marlborough Hill | 1876.

XXIV.

The Poetical Works | of | Percy Bysshe Shelley | Edited by | Harry Buxton Forman | In Four Volumes | Volume I. [II. III. IV.] London | Reeves and Turner 196 Strand | 1876.

XXV.

The Complete | Poetical Works | of | Percy Bysshe Shelley. | The Text carefully revised with Notes and | A Memoir, | by | William Michael Rossetti. | In Three Volumes. | Vol. I. [II. III.] London: | E. Moxon, Son, And Co., | Dorset Buildings, Salisbury Square, E.C. | 1878.

XXVI.

The Poetical Works | of Percy Bysshe Shelley | Given from His Own Editions and Other Authentic Sources | Collated with many Manuscripts and with all Editions of Authority |

Together with Prefaces and Notes | His Poetical Translations and Fragments | and an Appendix of | Juvenilia | [Publisher's Device.] Edited by Harry Buxton Forman | In Two Volumes. | Volume I. [II.] London | Reeves and Turner, 196, Strand | 1882.

XXVII.

The | Poetical Works | of | Percy Bysshe Shelley | Edited by | Edward Dowden | London | Macmillan and Co., Limited | New York: The Macmillan Company | 1900.

XXVIII.

The Poetical Works of | Percy Bysshe Shelley | Edited with a Memoir by | H. Buxton Forman | In Five Volumes | [Publisher's Device.] Vol. I. [II. III. IV. V.] London | George Bell and Sons | 1892.

XXIX.

The | Complete Poetical Works | of | Percy Bysshe Shelley | The Text newly collated and revised | and Edited with a Memoir and Notes | By George Edward Woodberry | Centenary Edition | In Four Volumes | Volume I. [II. III. IV.] [Publisher's Device.] London | Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner and Co. | Limited | 1893.

XXX.

An Examination of the | Shelley Manuscripts | In the Bodleian Library | Being a collation thereof with the printed | texts, resulting in the publication of | several long fragments hitherto unknown, | and the introduction of many improved | readings into *Prometheus Unbound*, and | other poems, by | C. D. Locock, B.A. | Oxford | At the Clarendon Press | 1903.

XXXI.

Ingpen, R., and Peck, W. E. *The Complete Works of P. B. Shelley*, Julian Edition, 10 vols. E. Benn, London: 1926-30. (Scribners, N.Y.)

The early poems from the Esdaile MS. book, which are included in this edition by the kind permission of the owner of the volume, Charles E. J. Esdaile, Esq., appeared for the first time in Professor Dowden's *Life of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, published in the year 1887.

One poem from the same volume, entitled *The Wandering Jew's Soliloquy*, was printed in one of the Shelley Society Publications (Second Series, No. 12), a reprint of *The Wandering Jew*, edited by Mr. Bertram Dobell, in 1887.

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